THE PASSIONATE REBEL

A ROMANTIC BIOGRAPHY OF LORD BYRON

KASIMIR EDSCHMID

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—*New York Times.*

Dale Mitchell,
October 14, 1931

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THE PASSIONATE REBEL

THE LIFE OF
LORD BYRON

BY

KASIMIR EDSCHMID

TRANSLATED BY
WHITTAKER CHAMBERS

NEW YORK - MCMXXX

ALBERT & CHARLES BONI

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By Albert & Charles Boni

The herald of world literature.—(GOETHE)

Not only did he have relations with his friend C., but even with his own tame bear.—(ENGLISH AFTER-DINNER CONVERSATION)

C'est du génie mal logé.—(STENDHAL)

My friend had faults, but no vices. His merits were of the very highest order.—(LORD BROUGHTON, IN REPLYING TO AN ATTACK IN PARLIAMENT)

Well, he was a fine beast.—(ONE OF HIS DESCENDANTS IN NICE)

My digestion is weak. I am too splenetic and live principally on vegetables.—(BYRON HIMSELF)

A Sybarite.—(CARLYLE)

His dramas are tedious.—(HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE)

My own, beloved, beautiful Byron.—(HIS SISTER)

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Part I

THE PASSIONATE REBEL

I.

THE BEAST

ABERDEEN is a city in the northeast of Scotland, about which there is nothing to be said.

One night the only daughter of the late George Gordon of Gight returned to her native city. She arrived in some haste, with her new-born child, going at once to her little estate of Mar Lodge. A few weeks later, a part of its furnishings was brought to the city, and she herself, with the nurse and child, followed to her town-house. Three days later, her husband, Captain Byron, arrived from London.

In a place like Aberdeen, events of this kind might be expected to have an interest all their own. There was not much talk, however. Everybody understood well enough what it meant when someone who had once succeeded in leaving Aberdeen actually returned there again.

The wedded pair had lived in Aberdeen some two months, when the Captain received a visitor.

"I suppose you noticed, too, that M. Despars has very little luggage with him?" asked the heiress of the late George Gordon of Gight something like a half hour after her eyes first rested on her guest. Her interest was visibly and abundantly chilly.

Her observation and several of the Captain's retorts resulted in his finally carrying out his resolve to move up to the next floor, while he sedulously avoided meeting his wife on the stairs.

"Is there really anything worth seeing here?"

asked M. Despars the next morning, as he and the Captain left the house for a stroll.

"Summer's coming," the Captain reflected, snuffing the air. "We can have a look at the quays, at any rate." They walked along the Dee to the harbor.

Leaning against the walls, in front of the huge ware-houses, sat a dozen coastwise skippers, with red heads and white beards on their cheeks, puffing at their clay pipes.

At the table in the hotel, the Captain's eye rested on two well-dressed men who were tracing on the marble top with their index fingers.

"Lunatics?" inquired his guest who had followed his glance.

"Oh, not a bit of it," replied the Captain. "They're good old sorts. They're simply writing in their spilt whiskey the names of girls they may have seduced fifty years or so ago."

"Why on earth do *you* live in Aberdeen?" asked the other.

"Be thankful," answered the Captain grimly, "that I haven't yet asked why *you* came here."

Despars was a keen, lean man with a smooth face and sharp, half-shut eyes. He ignored the rebuff.

"At least they play patience here?" he asked, after a glance which took in his surroundings in a twinkling.

"No, they don't play patience," said the Captain, sipping his mocha. "But if they chose to, they're the people to have the shirt off your back in a week, Despars."

"That wouldn't take much," said Despars, with a significant glance at the suit which Byron had lent him. He could not understand why the Captain, who was generous enough in other things, had

placed at his disposal all the oldest clothes he had. Until they had finished and were sauntering again down the street his gloomy thoughts kept hovering over this question. Finally he thrust it aside, with the conclusion that the Captain had become a miser.

But the truth was quite otherwise. Byron had given him his old clothes because he really believed, in all honor, that ordinary attire was too exceptional for a hole like Aberdeen.

For the most part he went about in the Highland costume, in which other Scotch lairds played golf. To him Aberdeen was just "the country." When he, the Englishman, came striding down the streets of the city for his stroll along the Dee, bare-kneed and kilted, in his short check-coat, with a dinner jacket, as "ruddy" as it is possible to have, the very dogs, had nature permitted, would have laughed.

The Aberdonians did laugh, although without showing it too much. Their humor was quite as dour as their general character. Never for a moment did they alter countenance, even when one of them died. Why should they be obliged to laugh at an Englishman because he acted ridiculous?

At that moment the Captain suddenly grasped his guest's arm tightly. A lady crossed the street directly in front of them, and they waited at a perfumer's till she had reached her house.

"It's none too pleasant, having your wife cut me like that," said Despars, with a glance after her vanishing figure.

"Oh, well!" said Byron, and shrugged his shoulders.

"And I've got two months to spend with this crank," thought Despars savagely, biting his nails.

"It looks as if I'd have nothing to do for two months but reflect on lunch and dinner in the streets for hours, before I can even get around to eat them."

He laughed bitterly, but really no other course was open to him, since he had good reasons for not seeing London for a while.

Meanwhile the lady had entered her house. She climbed the lower stairs, and the grace with which her long, voluptuous body could move was first clearly visible in the ascent. Her eyes were black, her hair almost blue-black. Her glance had that Scotch expression, at once keen and short-sighted. Only her heavily penciled eyebrows were striking.

"May Gray," said she, throwing herself into a chair, "when did the 'Beast' come home last night?"

The brown-faced girl showed her firm white teeth. She had slept well. She was not interested as to when the Captain went to bed. Neither could she understand why her mistress was pacing to and fro in the chamber, gazing at the ceiling.

May Gray had a slight aversion to the Captain, because he was an Englishman. That she never showed it had to do with one of his ancestors who, a hundred years before, had been an admiral and had made a voyage around the world. This heroic deed had worked so powerfully upon the nurse's mind while she was still in school, that even to that day she entertained a grudging respect for the Captain. It was the only symptom of imagination that the good creature ever exhibited in her whole life.

"You may go," said the lady as she received no answer from the nurse. As the girl shut the door, the Captain's wife saw, lying on the table, a note which had certainly not been there before.

She rang.

The nurse re-entered, peered attentively at her mistress' face, and hastened to close the windows. But it was an unnecessary precaution. This time the wife of Captain B. was brief and to the point.

"The next time you leave a note like that in here, I'll throw you head over heels out of the house," she said. "Do you understand? And if you see the Captain on the stairs, you can tell him that I have no intention of cramming his belly full of pound notes." She threw the note on the floor and began to rage.

"When he was running around with Lady Caermarthen he squandered four thousand pounds on her in one year. But he can go choke on the one pound he wants from me today!"

The girl remained silent. She knew, as accurately as did the whole street, the sums the Captain had squandered on his earlier passions, for their names and the sums were frequently and loudly proclaimed. At such moments May Gray would willingly have been as temperamental as her mistress, but she was, unfortunately, phlegmatic, and, after the fashion of her country, considered such exhibitions unhealthy.

With a nod her mistress dismissed her, marveling.

In half an hour May appeared again.

"Did I ring?" asked her mistress.

"Yes."

"Take that up to the Captain," said her mistress, drawing a note from her purse.

"If only he wouldn't pace up and down like that!" she thought. Those footsteps above her head were the most devilish thing he did to her. She could forgive him for having ruined her. She could pardon him for having made of her a poor woman

instead of the influential one she should have been. But constantly to hear those footsteps—and never to see the man! She waited in dread for those footsteps whenever she went to bed, whenever she awoke, whenever she lay down on the divan.

She knew quite well that her marriage was the greatest stupidity of her life; and in her own way, she even hated the Captain.

Yet like all women who have been wrenched from childhood by a sudden, and to them adventurous, seduction, she was somehow, and in spite of everything, still in love with her seducer. Despite the fact that she knew well enough that her relatives, who would no longer assist her husband, were perfectly right, she took their action in extremely bad part. She broke with a half dozen members of the family, who for good reasons had thrown the Captain over. When other well-meaning people of her set attacked him, she defended him. In her accounts he assumed the most astonishingly noble features. Thus in time the Captain achieved a dual personality. One half existed exclusively in her imagination—and was a very noble gentleman.

The other was the target of her stormy temperament, which the astonished May Gray watched amazingly unfold. Kindhearted as she was, she could be absolutely unrestrained. She gradually grew accustomed to belaying her husband, in the nurse's presence, with all kinds of zoological epithets; and despite the girl's loyalty, this could not remain wholly unknown.

Could she have gained some kind of command over her vehement nature, the Captain would have been easy to manage. When he arrived in Aberdeen he was meek enough. You could have stood him on

his head and not a shilling would have rattled out.

Yet, from the very first hour of his arrival, his wife lived in dread that he might disappear again. She knew him well enough to know that he would be off the instant he had a sizeable sum in his pocket. This state of dread and uncertainty was worrying her almost to death.

It was for this reason that she simply could not endure the sight of M. Despars. She saw in him nothing but a tempter, luring the Captain back to the "world." Her state of mind was not stable enough to discern that the Frenchman had no keener desire than to give the "world" as wide a berth as possible.

The Captain accepted the fact of his marriage in the least complicated, in fact, in a rather practical, way. His nature, which at times was capable of sacrificing everything to a woman, was equally shameless at times in taking everything that woman had.

He possessed a wife of unusual beauty to Scottish eyes; but, though there had been a time when he was insanely in love with her, he had long been totally indifferent. He quickly realized what an aggravation the Frenchman was to those more practical demands which he made on his wife, and which he commonly conveyed in a note. In this connection he contrived a scheme.

Halting by chance, during a walk, under the window of his house, he suddenly drew Despars to one side.

"Did you see my wife?" he said quickly. Despars observed a shadow withdraw from the window.

"I always have the feeling, when I pass here, that some day something unpleasant is going to land on my skull," said the Captain uneasily.

"Probably the piano," said Despars. "God knows I ought to have stayed in Edinburgh."

"Don't talk nonsense," replied the Captain coolly. "You don't really look like a man in love with legal difficulties. But once your luggage does get here, it might be better, for your own sake, if you took an empty house a few doors down the street."

In the evening M. Despars vanished from the sight of the woman who, without knowing, hated him. His rèmoval made easier the Captain's inroads on the few pounds sterling which his wife drew from Mar Lodge, and which a far-sighted relative, by a little legal proviso, had kept him from squandering.

Ever since the Captain had lived a floor higher than the rest of the family, he had seen his son only at ten o'clock in the morning, on the promenade. He used to take him from the nurse, and walk, stooping a little, by the side of the toddling baby, who was just learning to take his first steps and to flail his arms around in the air.

Something like two weeks after the Frenchman's removal, the Captain ventured once again to take M. Despars with him on the promenade. They strolled back and forth but it got to be eleven o'clock and the nurse had not appeared.

"You'll see, they're playing a trick on me," he said in vexation. He was still not quite clear as to whether he ought really to be angry or not.

The reason for the absence was as follows. The boy had fallen from a table, had raised a huge lump on his forehead, but, without uttering a sound, had climbed back again and gone on playing. When the nurse and the mother came in later and saw the lump, about which they could get the boy to say next

to nothing, they imagined some terrible malady. The girl suggested that the child might lose his reason or go mad, while for a time his mother had ideas of plague. But during the half hour that was lost before the doctor came, the lump disappeared under cold compresses, while they also managed to drag from the boy that he had fallen from the table. These excitements considerably delayed the daily outing.

At twelve o'clock the Captain was still on the promenade, crimson with rage. He had convinced himself, while discussing the case at length with the Frenchman, that he was the victim of a conspiracy.

At half-past twelve May Gray appeared on the promenade with the child, and five minutes later she was reduced to a wet rag. The Captain had addressed her in a tone that shattered all her schoolgirl illusions. She lost immediately her dream of that heroic circumnavigation of the globe, but the dream was of no particular importance to her anyway. The Captain did not waste much time on her. He simply took the child by the hand. But then something quite unforeseen occurred. The boy could not be budged from the spot. He was as white as his coat, while he gritted his teeth. Otherwise he would not move at all.

"Come, chick," said the Captain, tugging at his arm. The two-year-old fell to the ground, gnashing his teeth without stopping.

For a moment the Captain was so astonished that he stared first at Despars and then at the child, with narrowed eyes. Knowing nothing about the care of infants, he was afraid at first that he had hurt the little boy.

"Why won't Geordie run?" he demanded of the

nurse, who picked up the child and set him on his feet again.

"Probably because he doesn't want to," she said.

The Captain was so impressed by the incident that for half an hour he said nothing. He was convinced that the child had been taught his strange behavior. "Now do you understand the horrible position I am in?" he suddenly asked the Frenchman at the end of the walk. "Obviously they've set the boy against me, but I'll give them as good as they send." Whom he meant by "them" he did not say. But obviously he referred first and foremost to his wife.

He was really so injured that he even disregarded his dependant position and the income from Mar Lodge, and could think of nothing but exercising his rights, that is, of punishing his wife. In this he did her a complete injustice. His son alone was to blame for the scene, for he had small affection for his father.

At lunch-time the Captain ordered his trunks to be brought from his wife's house to the Frenchman's flat, three doors away. Half an hour later the wife of Captain Byron received a note from her husband, in which he expressed the wish that the child be brought to him.

The mother, on applying to the authorities, received the original intelligence that since the boy belonged by law to the Captain, a regiment of Highlanders could not prevent him from exercising his rights.

"You are mistaken about that," said the mother.

She made May Gray tell her a dozen times, and in great detail, what had happened on the promenade. In the evening she sent Geordie over in the nurse's arms.

"Little Pup," she said with a smile, "manage the affair yourself." She watched the girl a while as she trudged down the street with the child. During the night she dreamed of the objectionable members of the Captain's family. One had laughed himself to death. Two more had loved each other so intensely that they died on the spot. God knows, it was a trying family into which she had blundered. "The little Pup will manage things all right," she thought as she awoke for a moment. With that thought she dropped off contentedly to sleep again.

The Captain returned the child in the course of the next forenoon. During the night, Geordie had so harried his father with his whims and wishes, that the Captain willingly renounced a repetition of such a pleasure.

This was the last opportunity that young George ever had to see his father.

For shortly afterwards the Captain departed for Edinburgh, leaving the Aberdonians to twirl their own crooked walking sticks. Those crooked sticks had always moved him to particularly ironic enjoyment during his strolls. They were probably the only things that the Aberdonians had accepted by way of innovation since the French Revolution.

On their part, the Aberdonians later remembered, with the merest twinkle in their eyes, a Frenchman in cast-off London horse-show attire, and another man, flat-bellied and broad-shouldered, who used for a time to stroll along the Dee in Highland costume, after ruining the heiress of the richest man in the north of Scotland.

Yet, when six months later the Captain died at Valenciennes in the arms of his friend Despars, it was a terrible shock to his wife. In her heart of

hearts, she loved the Captain so deeply that for two days she lay as though dead.

Afterwards she would ask everyone who had seen him in the interim, how he had looked, what he had worn, what he had eaten. Four years later, during a love-scene in the theater, she was so moved that with the cry, "My Captain," she fell fainting. At first glance she seemed a material woman, but he was deeply romantic.

When, at the age of eight years, her son Geordie fell in love with one of her little nieces, she wrote with her own hand a series of love letters so impassioned that a little tragedy might well have been the upshot. Of course she loved her son with the same intensity. But she never loved him as deeply as Captain John B., her husband, the man she had eloped with, the only man with whom she had ever slept.

2.

THE PUP

The relations between mother and son grew stranger the older the boy grew and the more and more unaccountable became the lady, who was slowly putting on flesh. During her attacks of temperament, he would merely gaze at his mother with the penetrating and mysterious eye of a child. May Gray would have sworn that he never listened to her, but was all the while brooding over something else.

It was some time later before she discovered that Geordie had made some definite observations about his mother. The child had soon noticed that his mother compared everybody to animals, praised or blamed or classified him in that way. So the first time he saw a crow, he himself cried, "Mammy!" May Gray took exceptional pains to point out to him that it was a bird and was called a "crow." Geordie learned the word carefully.

The crow's way of holding its head, its smooth, thick body, and its violent motions reminded him constantly of his mother. One day, to May Gray's horror, Geordie suddenly called out "Crow," instead of "Mammy."

He was not gently handled in the effort to break him of the habit, but it was no use. He simply called her "Crow" in private.

One evening they visited a circus in Aberdeen, where a Soudanese Abu Makub was on show. The gray bird limped through its tricks with such supreme contempt for mankind that even the Aber-

donians were obliged to smile a little. Among the people whom Geordie saw laughing around him were some of his own relatives. Surprised, the boy looked down at his leg. He was pale when he glanced up again. Something had been wrong with his ankle since birth. One of his feet was a little distorted and as a result, one of his legs was a little lame. Geordie did not exactly limp, but when he moved quickly, it looked as if he were limping. He had borne this small misfortune as unconcernedly as all young children bear an affliction that seems natural to them.

That night, in bed, May Gray surprised the boy slowly tearing his night-shirt into shreds. The nurse was so surprised at his silent bitterness that she did not even think to ask if he had gone crazy. His eye darkened for a moment.

"May Gray, do you think that Mammy will buy me a machine?" he asked quietly.

"Of course she will, Geordie," the girl said, without understanding a word, "she'll give it to you right away." She refrained from saying what "it" was.

"May Gray, don't be so stupid," said the boy. "I mean a machine for my foot."

He had recalled a conversation that his mother had had with his aunt. His aunt was deaf, and confused a good many words. Among other things she spoke of a "machine" when she meant a brace. She had recommended the Crow to put Geordie's leg into a brace, but all that had escaped his memory.

He now clung to the word "machine" as Jacob clung to the angel. He did it with a strange persistence. He thought and talked of nothing but machines. He begged so hard for machines to straighten his leg, that the Crow, who had at first

been opposed to the idea, gave in, suddenly as usual, changed her mind and ordered the frame in even greater haste than the boy demanded.

As soon as the instrument had arrived, the foot was forced into a normal position and bandaged to the frame. As a result, the Pup suffered an agony that was utter folly, for what was missing was a sinew that no twisting of the ankle, or bandaging, or any instrument could replace.

In that position, he learned his first letters. At first he learned willingly, though with tears in his eyes, but so fond was he of study, that he tried feebly to smile now and again, which won him the affection of his tutor.

Yet this very affection was a further torment to the Pup, for the sympathy of the young man who taught him his letters embittered his life still more. The Pup suffered such agonies that he could not bear to be pitied for them into the bargain.

"It would be awfully nice, sir," he said one day, "if you wouldn't be so kind to me. Please tell me quite frankly when I make a stupid answer."

His tutor did not understand from what depths of the child's soul came the willingness to suffer still worse agony than he was actually in. He never did understand, nor could he ever have understood, that the Pup thought of nothing else but to learn to run like the gardener's boys in the street.

But since the Pup did not possess strength enough to conceal his piercing pain for the whole lesson, and at the same time learn his letters, he deceived his tutor in a strange way, in order not to disappoint him. He learned so quickly, he simply memorized the one syllable words, that he was sup-

posed to spell out in his primer, without really being able to read a single letter of them.

But he was discovered when his tutor asked him to read a word out of order. As he could not figure out so quickly in his head what the word was, he kept silent, bewildered.

At first the young tutor did not fathom this procedure on the part of his pupil. But suddenly he understood it so completely that he reddened. In an instant he comprehended not only the agony of the little boy, but also his heroism. And what is more remarkable still, had the delicacy to conceal his discovery.

Hiding his feeling in his heart, he rose and went to the window, continuing, as if nothing had happened to hear the words in their accustomed order. This generosity, added to all his others, made a deep impression on the boy. He saw how noble a man can be in a quite casual way. It moved him so profoundly that it took some time for him to calm himself.

At that moment Mammy entered. Now that the instrument was in the house, she was all on the side of the once despised brace, and watched more eagerly than Geordie himself that he stood it well. "May Gray," she said to the nurse as she entered and saw the boy's face, "there, you see, he's crying." She now held up the example of his father more frequently to the Pup. She was embarked on a period when she forgot that the Captain had betrayed her and left her to twiddle her thumbs alone.

"John would never have shown that he was in pain," she added. "But then John had punch."

God knows why Mammy was always flinging at him the word "punch," which was then fashionable.

But fling it she did, as if it bewitched her, parading it at every opportunity before the boy. Do what he would, he was always hitting against the sharp word "punch."

Mammy was never particularly logical, though she could be extraordinarily captious, and was all too willing to repeat things twice over and in various ways. But Geordie felt that she was never more captious than when she reproached his own cowardliness with the Captain's "punch," an injustice that galled him to tears. At last his bitterness was so full that the boy, who could hardly breathe for the pain of his instrument, fell into a faint.

When an eau-de-cologne compress revived him five minutes later, he smiled at the Crow. But one phase of his youth had closed. For at the moment when he recovered consciousness, he had suddenly read his mother through and through. He perceived that the Crow never actually knew what she was saying or doing. She was always contradicting herself.

He had heard enough from May Gray of his father's villainies—but, in spite of them, the Captain was a hero again, though only yesterday the Crow had heaped curses on his entire family. Well, one must let Mammy talk. She was not to be taken so seriously when she was in anger as when she was loving. From then on the Crow could do what she wanted. Geordie tried always to be pleasant to her.

In the course of months it grew obvious that, apart from the pain it gave, the "machine" had no other effect on Geordie. Yet even when the doctor shrugged his shoulders, Geordie was for enduring it another half year.

"My dear lad," said the stooped old man with the pointed nose, "if that thing were ever going to do anything, it would have done it."

"Isn't he a strange boy, doctor?" said Mammy at the door. "At first he keeled over with the pain, and now when he doesn't have to have it any more, he wants to be left in the machine."

But Geordie didn't want to be left in the machine —he simply wanted to get his leg into its true shape.

The stay in the sick-room had had a visible effect on his character. Swathed in bandages, caught in the brace as though in the fires of hell, while he waited, with his shy, classic smile, for improvement, a terrific energy had awakened in this babe just out of swaddlings. The more he had to suffer, the more determined he was in all the circumstances of life, wherever it was necessary, to make up for his defects.

His twisted foot soon led him to prize above all else his body's power of harmonious expression. This obsession lent to his disposition, though by nature amiable, something so violent at times that his mother understood it as little as did May Gray, particularly as the spasm was often accompanied by the most gracious shyness. Nobody understood that no matter where the boy was standing, what he was doing, whether he was simply sitting still, or entering a room, his first thought was always on becoming as good a walker as those around him, —those who possessed one sinew more than he.

He practiced incessantly in order to be able to run and swim well. At the same time, he began to practice certain sports earlier than most boys of his age. With running there was very little that he could do. Here was a barrier that not even his will could overcome. But in the water, nature seemed to have

granted him the greatest odds. He swam like a seal and had the daring of a shark. On the other hand, a feeling of timidity hampered his riding. He could not rid himself of the idea that a horse might throw him in galloping, while he saw himself landing on his helpless foot, which would then shatter like glass. At night he would wake up with a scream from some such dream.

But an unexpected piece of good fortune brought him release. When he managed the first horse he rode, with the snaffle only, checked it and rode with it the very first time through the whole school, while it obeyed the slightest pressure of his finger; when he felt the creature vibrate to his hand like a delicate instrument, his nightmare vanished for good. In its place, he enjoyed a real bliss. He felt it mount warmly in him as he thought that no one would notice his foot when he was in the saddle. People would not exchange glances about him, and no one would make the labored effort to act as if he did not limp a little. On his horse, the lad not only enjoyed the art of controlling it, but he lived to the full. On his horse, the Pup was the handsomest boy in Aberdeen.

In his tenth year it looked as if his family had suddenly decided to vanish off the earth. At one blow, three of his father's relatives died one after another. This series of mortal lapses meant much for Geordie.

One morning, just as he was halving an egg, the Crow told him to come with her into the drawing-room. Geordie wondered why she spoke with so much pathos, for she was too corpulent for high tragedy. He followed Mammy, thinking her excitement rather funny.

In the salon she clasped him to her and said in the same unnatural tone, "Only think, you Pup you, Lord Byron is dead."

The lad felt himself turn white and red, and was angry at it. The Crow stood as helpless before him as a fish out of water, and stared into his eyes.

He was all but frantic, yet made the greatest effort to control himself.

The death of Lord B., who was quite a young man, tossed a peerage and a large fortune into his lap. He understood well enough that at that moment he had entered a group of some four hundred men who ruled England, India, Canada, and God knows what besides, and that now, if he cared for such sport, he could even take precedence of little Continental princes at breakfast. The notion sprang from a story of May Gray's, and he did not waste much thought on it. But it suddenly occurred to him that they would have to address him respectfully at school.

"Well, Mammy," said he quietly after a while, "that's a great piece of good luck. Now you can have a maid of your own."

"Don't you see that your whole life is going to change at one stroke?" asked the Crow, who felt offended that Geordie had not shouted.

"I suppose so, Mammy," said Geordie. "May I finish my egg now?"

Fortunately, the Crow did not see how he dealt with the egg. She remained in the drawing-room, and wept, partly for joy, and partly because she was very angry at Geordie.

Strangely enough, though her life had been chiefly embittered by the grinding poverty of those latter years, it was the rank and the title that had suddenly

been hung round Geordie's neck that most impressed her. She abruptly changed a number of her old habits. She had always liked to call Geordie the Pup; Geordie, who felt something of the Pup in his nature, had not been greatly concerned by it. But she stopped calling him it altogether. The Pup vanished from the household. She either called him correctly by his first name, or she used "B.," which she had been accustomed to employ at one time when, in fury, she did not want to utter the hated Captain's full name. Sometimes, in anger, she called Geordie "Beast," just like the blessed Captain.

On the day when the news flew about Aberdeen, May Gray was in the country with her people. She first learned of it that night. In the morning she brought Geordie his tea in bed as usual.

"Well, well," she said, "what will the neighbors be saying?" She was beaming with pride that such an event should have transpired in her family, and felt more excited than Geordie. May Gray and the Crow, each on her own account, went out frequently that day to be fortuitously felicitated by the neighbors.

"Geordie, we can move to London now," said Mammy in the evening.

"Who can?" asked Geordie.

"You and I," the Crow replied, with a distrustful twitch of her mouth at the simple question.

"All right," said Geordie, "but we'll take May Gray with us, won't we?"

On her departure Mammy avenged herself thoroughly on the Aberdonians for all that had been done to her. She commissioned a ridiculous number of vans, though one would have sufficed, for her

furniture. She intended the sight of the crowd of movers to put the "street" in its place. She still remembered all the witticisms that had been coined because her husband, Captain John B., had left Scotland without so much as a walking stick. Somehow, walking sticks had always had a symbolic import for her misery in Aberdeen. But half an hour before departing she was reconciled with her own family, against whom she had nursed a perennial resentment for refusing to receive her husband; which, in this case, had nothing to do with walking sticks, but with morals. Her progress, with the half dozen furniture vans, through the main street of Aberdeen, was one of the few moments of perfectly unadulterated bliss that the heiress of George Gordon of Gight ever experienced.

After all they did not go to London. The Crow who for seven long years had had no cook and no maid, in the interval between her first decision and their departure, concluded that it would be much more impressive, and after so many deprivations far more delightful, to go instead to Newstead Abbey, the family's ancestral seat, though she was assured that it was in ruins. She deferred the longed-for comforts a little longer, in order to taste in advance the power that lay in being the mother of a peer in his minority, at a very old ancestral hall in England.

The nurse did not make the journey with them. She steadfastly refused to set foot on soil that was not Scotch. Nothing availed against her; she would have gone with the same unwillingness to Hell, and apparently she made no distinction between Hell and England, though she was alike unacquainted with either. The Pup found her reasons very child-

ish. He spoke to May Gray as if the good creature, who was nearly thirty, had had a couple of children by him. But there was no convincing her, for she was afraid. The Crow defended the nurse's silliness against Geordie, demanding that she be respected. But at last they both united in agreeing that it was spleen on May Gray's part. Mammy was rather pleased that this spleen of the nurse's first came to light at the end of her years of service.

May Gray was the one creature whom the Pup had ever unwaveringly loved. Hence he parted unwillingly from her, but he agreed with the Crow's judgment of her logic. For the first time in a long while he found himself in accord with Mammy.

"I think May Gray is stupid," said he as the last Aberdonian tree faded from sight. "I've thought so for years," Mammy answered. "You can believe me, if we'd been rich, she'd have pilfered from us."

"Never," cried Geordie, aroused. He sensed subtly that it was dangerous to agree with Mammy. She was always excessive.

After they had been traveling a while, the Crow suddenly said "I have a piece of news for you, Geordie. I've been hearing a host of good things about a new apparatus. I think it would be quite practical if you could bring a straightened leg into the new position that you are assuming."

The nearer they got to Newstead Abbey, the more fantastic grew the Crow's ideas of her new position in society. It went against her feelings to picture Geordie with a damaged leg, and, childish and romantic as she was, she began to work on the poor boy to pack himself into the "machine" again.

Geordie refused with determination.

"Mammy," he said quietly, contemplating his

nails, "I haven't forgotten the pain I had to suffer from that swindle for nothing."

"But who's talking about pain?" said the Crow," provoked. "This new brace won't give you any pain at all."

Georgie sensed from her intonation that she thought him a coward. He didn't want to be a coward, and wondered if it would be altogether useless after all. He remained thoughtful. The Crow perceived that she ought not to say anything more if she didn't want to spoil things. Geordie was already wavering. For most of the postures and motions of social life, he had learned to carry his body in such a way that no one would ever have suspected that his foot did not quite behave. Except in going upstairs, the defect was hardly noticeable, for through his continuous training in sport, the functions of a number of small muscles, that were missing, were taken over by neighboring sinews. But in brusque or sudden movements, Geordie was lost. He could not run through a room without betraying himself, and he was well aware of it.

Mammy was perfectly satisfied with Geordie's half-consent. She had the happy faculty of taking a small success for a complete victory. Now when she spoke to Geordie, it was in the way one talks to small monkeys.

The journey over the wretched roads was not a pleasant one. When at last, in a barren region a hundred miles from London, they arrived at a toll barrier that had to be lifted, Mammy asked the woman, in the pause while this was being done, "What is that yonder?" Geordie saw a dark line of tree-tops.

"That is a park," said the woman, who did not look intelligent.

"Who owns it?" asked the Crow, in so gracious a tone that the Pup pricked up his ears in astonishment.

"A madman who has just died," said the woman.

It was Newstead Abbey.

3.

LUNCH IS SERVED WITH PISTOLS

To anger his son, the old lord had had the forest cut down and let the Abbey decay, so that the worthy lad might be handed an empty plate at his death. But his efforts had been futile, for his son died before him. His grandson had finally died, too, during a fishing trip in Corsica, before the Pup, the next of kin, inherited the vainly wasted place.

Geordie's first use of his position was to ask detailed questions about the personality of his predecessor. In the beginning, when the doctors were torturing him like a criminal, this had been his chief distraction. And what he heard was remarkable enough.

Mammy, meanwhile, did her utmost to create a posthumously respectable character for the late lunatic. Her respect for her new possessions was so great, that she felt she owed her predecessor in so much grandeur at least a posthumous share in the adulation she demanded for herself. So she ordered all the service to remain in exactly the same style as the old man had had it.

One day at lunch the Crow found a gigantic field-pistol in front of her plate.

"What is that?" asked Mammy, a menacing cloud on her brow.

Geordie turned round. "What is that, Murray?" he inquired of the servant, with an innocent expression. "Mammy means this thing." He indicated it with his finger.

The evening before, Mammy had once again specifically instructed the butler that everything should be served exactly as in the old lord's time.

"That is the lunch service that Lord Byron used to the very day of his death," said the butler as he changed the plates.

"You see Mammy," said the Pup pleasantly, "Our predecessor apparently used to shoot out the window for dessert. Let's ask Murray." But Mammy did not let the question be put!

"Murray," she said with decision, "in future you will serve us as we are accustomed to be served. Without pistols," she added with a threatening look at Geordie, whom she suspected of being not entirely guiltless in this embellishing of the board.

The Pup had too much spare time. Several hours a day he sat in his instruments, in the courtyard, and would hardly have been a normal boy had he not thought up pranks out there in the fresh air. And a new cause for contention soon arose between mother and son.

For the Crow, who was now wholly obsessed by the "machine" had been set against Geordie's passion for sport, under the influence of the specialists, and made the most of every opportunity to rub it in.

But to Geordie, his new position seemed exactly suited for continuing his training. Two wings of Newstead Abbey lay in ruins. But the great front of the guest-house was still standing, with all its cells intact. Even the hall that led to the main building was passable. In the course of time, the park had encroached on the walls. Behind the guest-house lay a lake, whose banks the park had overrun with weeds and brushwood. From a distance of

six miles one could see, above the land of low hills, the trees of Newstead Abbey.

Round the whole estate ran a crenellated wall. By the lake stood two towers, one of which rose delicately from a hill. Just half the church was standing; the other half had become park.

In this wilderness Geordie could climb to his heart's content and strengthen his foot muscles. But the Crow would have liked to keep him in the apparatus all day.

"Do you know, Mammy," said Geordie at breakfast, "our wicked old predecessor in Newstead Abbey was a great sportsman?"

"What nonsense, Geordie. Old B. was so stiff you could have tied him to a tree. He mounted a horse about as often as I do."

"I didn't say anything about a horse," answered Geordie in vexation.

"I suppose I'm to conclude he climbed trees, then, like his young successor," said Mammy sarcastically. She perked and looked more like a crow than ever.

"You can ask Murray," replied Geordie. "He has shown me the whips, hanging in the knight's wing." He looked at his mother keenly. Suspicious as she was, she generally fell into most of his traps.

"So there *were* horses," she said angrily.

"No, rats," said Geordie, "but Murray doesn't think he rode them."

"I'll throw Murray out if he keeps telling you such stupid things," said the Crow, exasperated that the servant should retail the old man's foibles. Besides she was displeased to catch the momentary look, like that of a handsome wild beast, on Geordie's face.

"You forget, Mammy, that you can't turn Murray

out," he said, reaching up to the linden above him, to pull off a leaf. The Pup had touched the most vulnerable point in the Crow's position, and he possessed a small genius for not overlooking it. For to the Crow, in her thirst for power, it was almost unbearable to think that Geordie was a ward in chancery, and that the court had handed him over to the guardianship of Lord Carlisle—to his lordship's frank annoyance. In reality, the Crow could not change a single servant in Newstead Abbey without first asking permission of a man whom she did not even know.

His lordship was a dry man, absorbed in books, and cherished such an aversion to Newstead Abbey and its inhabitants, that he preferred never to see them. He directed Geordie's education from afar, by means of a regular campaign schedule of lessons, and a staff of tutors.

Mammy frequently sent the tutors back, owing to some defect in their table manners or their complexions. To the guardian's disgust, she interfered forcibly with the classical structure of his educational plan, which Carlisle, who knew Horace and Virgil by heart, had drawn up with much learned pedantry. Of course, the guardian had not reflected that his educational theories ill suited the atmosphere of a ruined abbey, whose late owner, on one journey, had shot his coachman and forced his wife to drive home with the dead man, whose fingers still clutched the reins.

Geordie knew very well how to evade both parties. A corpulent Scotch lady, troubled with occasional heart attacks, and a distinguished old eccentric, in a remarkable series of letters, aired their views as to how a young peer should be educated.

This was probably amusing enough for others. But it ended, for the contestants, with several pat letters from the Crow, so that, filled with the profoundest sense of injury, his lordship threw up his guardianship to chancery, though legitimately he could not. His attempt was in vain.

But, after a long conference between his guardian and the then secretary of the House of Lords, the Pup came to London. A week later the specialists had fled from Newstead Abbey.

Mammy accompanied Geordie, rented a house in Piccadilly, and worried both chancery and the tutors half sick because she took the boy from his lessons whenever it suited her to make a holiday. Geordie was put in the boarding school of one Dr. Glennie, and, in dealing with this gentleman, the Crow exhibited a sort of "punch" that baffled every effort at resistance.

In an attempt better to control his zeal, Dr. Glennie, after a short time, had a bed fitted up for the Pup in his own study, with the result that Geordie read through almost the entire library at night. This in no way furthered his progress at school. But it meant that at twelve years the boy possessed a deeper insight and breadth of interest than the majority of his comrades, though, by and large, he had less factual knowledge. Strangely enough, he wrote a beautiful hand. But even this virtue began to dim, the deeper he plunged into the battles of Lake Regilius and of Lake Antioch, or the bizarre theories of psychology.

The neglect of his handwriting at length compelled even Mammy to see that Geordie's education must be taking a one-sided turn. After a stay at Bath, where the Crow liked to parade herself and

the boy, and where she observed that he neither knew Latin nor could cipher correctly, she found herself for the first time in real perplexity. She wrote Lord Carlisle an inimitable letter, in which she expressed to him her indignation that her son could not speak fluent Latin.

As a result, it was proposed to the Pup that he go to Harrow. Geordie would have agreed to anything. Harrow, the school which educated most English statesmen, had a high reputation for sport. Besides, it was only twenty miles from London. Geordie was a little groggy with the flood of knowledge which had been pumped into him somewhat precipitately and rashly. A whole vast aquarium of knowledge was swimming in his head, without any order whatsoever. Suddenly Geordie felt no further inclination to accompany Hannibal over the Alps, or trace the constellations, or peruse Rousseau. He felt a longing for the trees that towered over Newstead Abbey, and for clean water to swim in. Boxing he had learned, in London, according to an exact theory. He wanted very much to make use of his acquirements.

One morning early in spring, Mammy took him through the country to Harrow. She sat opposite Geordie, considering him thoughtfully. Now that the Pup was passing from her sphere of influence, though with her own acquiescence, she felt mortally angry to let him out of her hands. In this bad temper she took one of her well-known notions. She had the carriage go down a side-road in search of her cousin, Admiral Parker's estate—though she had only the vaguest idea where it lay. As a result, they blundered miserably about, wasted whole hours, and finally had only time to drive up to the manor house

and send in greetings. But hardly had the servant run up the steps, when the Crow decided to get out anyway and take tea in the hall with the Admiral. Because he had a headache from the excitement, Geordie was left to wait for her in the coach. Left alone, he considered how he would be able to inspire respect in the two hundred boys at Harrow. The question occupied him day and night. He had two points that almost cancelled. On one hand, there was his game leg which exposed him to ridicule. On the other, his title, which gave him a very strong position in a conservative school, even in the eyes of the masters. In addition, he was a little afraid of being teased about Mammy, but that troubled him hardly at all. He had never exactly been through that stage in which parents are loved, but one does not care to be seen with them.

The Crow came down the steps, in a still worse humor, as Geordie saw from her lowering brow. She was angry because they had gone out of their way and because Geordie had stayed in the carriage. A storm came up into the bargain, and she had to deliver the boy at Harrow in an hour.

Geordie had jumped out of the coach and was giving her his hand to help her mount. At that moment a young girl ran down the steps and held out her hand to him. He could not detect the slightest trace of mockery in her face, yet he hated her most cordially and quickly climbed into the carriage behind the Crow. There his face maintained the coldest possible expression while his cousin embraced Mammy.

"Good-bye," the girl signaled from the terrace. As the coach turned, he saw her raise her hand in a

graceful little gesture, saw her pale hand like a bit of ribbon in the spring air.

Even before they had left the park, Mammy had become talkative again. She had contrived a plan to drag out the parting. She would stay through the entrance examination.

Neither paid much attention to the other, each being filled with his own thoughts. The Crow was abstracted because, through the new change in program, she was once more mistress of the situation. The Pup, on the other hand, journeyed on to Harrow with his right hand gripping the deathly pale wrist of his left as if he were suffering an attack of colic.

4.

BOXING AND A MIRROR

THE Pup would have been spared two months' exertions and physical fatigues, had Mammy not said aloud in the anteroom of the school, "So this is Harrow! Not so bad. I shall stay till tomorrow and see what Dr. Drury decides about you, my dear. Goodnight." This maternal declaration was overheard by some fifty of the two hundred boys at Harrow. There was something boisterously funny to these lads in the fact that a twelve-year-old boy should be escorted there by a lady, and a fat one at that. But it was still more excruciatingly funny that the lady had to put up for the night at Harrow, in order to superintend the new boy's entrance.

Mammy and her plan had left the Pup the slimest shred of credit at the school. For Harrow was a place where one must constantly be a little hero if he did not want to be laughed at.

Shortly afterwards, Geordie found himself confronting a man with a Roman nose and an oval alabaster head whose features expressed a mixture of energy and mentality, rare in an English face. He received Geordie rather coldly. After a few questions addressed to him, he took Mammy into another room where he spoke some five minutes with her. After that, he seemed somewhat more friendly to Geordie, though he made no move to give him his hand when he left the room.

Geordie spent the night at the inn with Mammy.

The next morning the Pup was examined in the

Library by three men, and gave, as he himself felt, rather confused answers. The two M.A.'s who probed his classical knowledge, expressed, in conversation with the third, their undisguised dissatisfaction with the pupil's educational groundings. After this conference Dr. Drury said, "You are right, one cannot put a boy into a class with those of his own age when he has not even a suspicion of the information requisite for it. Nevertheless, I should like to try him out."

"It is quite within your authority," said one M.A., "but why, exactly, should you want to?"

"An intuition," said Dr. Drury. "I venture to say that in a quarter of a year he will have made up his deficiencies."

The result was immediately communicated to Mammy.

The Pup accompanied her through the grounds to her coach, and had to listen on the way to reproaches which he hardly understood. Everyone had assured Mammy that Geordie, with his miserable training, would never be placed in a class of his own age, but somewhere much lower. She felt offended that Geordie should have passed the test. Evidently the boy was much better informed than she had thought. She felt swindled; the facts didn't jibe. Else she would have had no reason to part with so gifted a son.

But whether Geordie or her advisers must bear the blame, it was Geordie who, at the coach step, still heard that he was an ungrateful child, lacking in character, and would come to a bad end. Then Mammy stroked his hair, kissed him, and the coach drove off.

Geordie was led to a dormitory containing a

couple of beds. As he did not know what else to do, he lay down on one of them and fell asleep. Suddenly he was rudely awakened and taken to dinner, in order to be introduced to the school before the boys sat down to eat. Geordie looked into two hundred pairs of eyes, each of which, it seemed to him, was making an effort not to laugh.

"What will it be like when I have to go barefooted to the shower?" Geordie thought, and went pale, while he stared straight in front of him.

Without shoes, his walk was suspicious, and after the meal he got to bed as fast as he could. During the night he pondered for a long time whether it might not be more comfortable to pick a quarrel than to let one be forced on him.

But the night passed otherwise than he had expected. He was lying in such a way that he had the mirror on the opposite wall facing him. Always, just as the Pup was falling off to sleep, the dull gleam in the mirror grew stronger. It was always the little Parker girl that he suddenly saw in place of the glass, although he had not the slightest desire to see her. So he got up, stole to the wall, and hung his coat over the mirror.

The two boys, who shared the room, were Lord Clare and Robert Peel.

"Hallo!" cried Clare, and raised his handsome head from the pillow.

"Excuse me," said Geordie. "I only hung up my coat." He might have received a box on the ear for the nonsense he uttered. To his surprise neither of the boys troubled any further about him. But he would not for worlds have dreamed how ridiculous they thought him.

Just as he was opening his eyes in the morning, Peel came to his bed.

"Yesterday night," said Peel, "you gave me your hand when you came into our room. But unfortunately you afterwards forgot to give it to Lord Clare. I regret that I must give you your hand back again."

"Very well," said Geordie. "You may give it back to me, but permit me to return it to you—on the jaw this time."

Peel nodded genially. Geordie took off his nightgown. Then came the dreadful moment. He walked naked across the smooth stone floor to the shower-room. In his heart he felt miserable. Nevertheless, he watched the two boys closely. The evening before he had made an enemy of Clare by not greeting him. Clare was his equal, and Geordie, after that humiliating introduction in the dining-hall, would rather have bitten off his tongue than have made advances to a boy like Clare. To Peel, on the other hand, who would never have a peerage, he had behaved in a friendly way and shaken hands. Now both were his enemies.

The way to the bath, past the two of them, was one of the most terrible humiliations he could ever remember undergoing. It was so obvious how badly he walked that there was no use hiding anything. Geordie was completely at their mercy. But he looked them in the eye. As he was thinking that they would both burst out laughing, he merely heard Clare say, "Peel, we ought to get a mat for this floor."

Geordie's face reddened as did his whole body. He felt that the boys were treating him with unusual consideration. They were quite impersonal. It angered him to think that Clare spoke that way out

of pity for his foot, yet he had spoken in a very decent tone.

"Look out," said Peel. "I went headlong only yesterday. The floor's beastly slippery."

In the first hour of school Geordie's colossal ignorance struck even the other boys. In different circumstances, he might have aroused sympathy with it. Dr. Drury called him in during recess. Geordie stared at him while he was speaking, studying every wrinkle. He had never yet seen a face so white; one could examine almost all the veins under the skin. Yet this face attracted him.

The Doctor explained to him briefly that he would receive special help from a tutor, and that he expected that, in a quarter of a year, Geordie would be at the top of his form. This he said in the same tone as if he were explaining to him that a football is made of leather.

In the afternoon recess Geordie went down to the grounds where he saw a dozen or so boys standing in the third walk. He drew near, was gathered into their circle, and left it afterwards in his shirt and gloves.

At the farther end of the walk Peel was leaving a similar group and came to meet him. The boys who did not have to stand on guard, followed them and made a circle round them.

The fight did not go according to the Pup's wishes. For Peel was taller by far than he, and two years older. Geordie could not get through his upper guard. Afterwards he was convinced that he could have got Peel with two or three stomach punches. Naturally the fight was to his credit, even as a draw. But it did not clear up the situation as

amazingly as Geordie, in his ambition, had anticipated. He went, somewhat dampened, to bed.

"Why do you always cover up the looking-glass?" asked Clare that night.

The Pup hesitated a second.

"Lord Clare," he said, "I don't care to answer you now. But if you like, we can meet tomorrow evening."

The second fight went off with the same ceremonies. But this time Geordie had luck. He knocked Clare out with an uppercut. He himself emerged from the fight with a bruise on the temple. Peel immediately put a compress on it, and helped Clare to bed. But the concealment did not help Geordie much since he still had private lessons that evening.

The tutor, to whom this rare good fortune had fallen, avenged himself by omitting nothing by way of innuendo that could possibly be alluded to in the case. But he reported nothing about the fight, for fear he might have to superintend the culprit's punishment in his free time. Had Geordie been able to hear what the tutor said, over the throbbing in his brain, he might have taken himself, by phrenological comparison, for a second Cromwell.

The atmosphere was now clearer for him at Harrow. But he would have erred had he imagined that, now he had boxed himself in, his position was secure. The boys were unromantic, and judged each incident on its merits. Even after a half year, boys would begin to laugh when they saw Geordie, for they remembered his entrance. Geordie suffered most from the fact that his mother had been so fat: otherwise, the boys would long since have forgotten the incident. But it was precisely on this point that

he championed Mammy. Even in his thoughts he pictured himself as fighting under the shadow of the Crow, like a young, limping lion, as war-like as that forebear of his who had come to Derby with the Normans.

There was never a moment's unpleasantness about his foot. Geordie soon saw that he had nothing to fear on that score. Any boy who had ridiculed him for it would have been ostracised by the others. It was an unwritten law, but it constituted "fairness" for those two hundred boys. Geordie sensed that, even though they learned little, they never forgot that they would some day rule the land on which they then played football.

Nothing made the boy happier than thoughts of that kind. They were so much a part of his nature that he never had to learn them. They were the only things that he did not have to learn, swimming and riding excepted.

With Clare and a few others, Geordie was soon on friendly terms. But he was not exactly popular at first. In spite of that, however, he exercised his own influence in the school. This was because, though the boys in Harrow formed a kind of small republic, there were in reality two deep-rooted parties—those who were, or would some day be, peers, and those who would never attain to nobility —among whom were some desperately poor devils.

From the very first day, Geordie felt an inclination to sympathize with the scholarship boys, the boys who came to the school through the aid of foundations, and who, with their ill-fitting jackets and red wrists, stood miserable in the midst of aristocracy. Geordie, who knew from his foot what it meant to be an outcast, joined forces with these boys

from a feeling compounded of justice and something of a sense of proportion. But, though he could not have defined it clearly to himself, there was something else, too, that drew him to these lads, of whose lives he did not know much more than the recollections he carried over from Aberdeen and the gardener's boys. That poor-man's smell, which hung about their clothes, and which no amount of bathing could remove, stirred in him a sympathy that Clare could never quite understand.

On the other hand, Geordie hated those boys, and they were rather plentifully represented at Harrow, who acted as if their ancestors had taken part in the Crusades, whereas fifty years before they would have been glad to have enough to eat. But in that he was simply following the lead of Clare, who had become his fag-master. A fag-master at Harrow was an older boy who selected a younger, to initiate him into school life. Half a year later Geordie himself took the young Duke of Dorset into his room as his fag.

But whereas these lads drew a line of birth between themselves and the proletarians, and mocked, in their carefree way, the airs of the newly ennobled, a more positive idea struck Geordie.

"It's stupid," said he to Clare, to be conceited because one is accidentally born into the House of Lords. The only thing we ought to be proud of is that the people in our families have done so many first-class things in the course of a few hundred years. Do you know what I mean?"

Yet strangely enough, the more heatedly Geordie espoused this idea, the more he appeared to the proletariat as a champion of the noble clique. They gave him a nickname, that gradually penetrated the

ranks of the peers and was taken up by them, without Geordie's knowing it. They called him the "old Baron." Before others, at any rate, the proletariat was flattered when Geordie stood with it during recesses and bought it chocolate. But among themselves they poked fun at the arrogant fellow. Yet they wrote home as if they had been foregathering with the archangel Gabriel.

One Saturday noon Clare came into the room, panting for breath, and burst out on the threshold, "Think of it! Hag has been flogged by Butler."

That morning, during Drury's absence, Hag had appeared in class with an eye so badly swollen that one really could not look at him without crying, also. Drury's substitute, a red-haired Irishman named Butler, demanded an explanation of the swelling, which true to tradition, Hag refused to give.

Drury would have put him under arrest. But, in accordance with unwritten convention, the painful question about the swelling would never have been asked. Butler, who hated with all his soul Drury's proven ability to run the school, not only cross-examined Hag closely, but ordered him to his room and there, at the conclusion of his examination, beat him black and blue with a cane.

The boys immediately stormed into the dining-hall. Within five minutes they had hauled down the flag and turned off the water. It was in this way that the students for generations had proclaimed the limit of their discontent. After that they were ready for anything.

That evening Drury returned from London and conducted the investigation with so iron a face that both parties knew the result would be decisive.

Drury found himself confronted by a flock of the most deeply resentful boys. They sat up the entire night in the dining-hall, discussing, while now and again one of them was summoned to the rector. For a decade nothing had so rocked the school to its foundations.

What, did they really mean to compel them, for the first time since the school was founded, to do something dishonorable and denounce another student? Yes, and if such an attempt were theoretically possible, according to the school statutes, since when was it possible, or even permissible, to flog a boy, like a dog, for an honorable obstinacy? If this were made fair, they were all resolved to write to their fathers to take them out of Harrow. They were even prepared to be expelled from school for a conviction which their fathers would approve.

Thus, at two o'clock in the morning, Clare informed Dr. Drury, who listened to the fanfare without answering a syllable. It was quite clear what he thought about the matter. But he stated coldly and formally, from behind an aegis of unfriendliness, that he could not listen to speeches about honor from boys who had hauled down the ancient flag of Harrow, and refused to surrender the key to the water-pipes. The whole business, in fact, had become a struggle for the key.

By three o'clock things had gone so far, that no more was said about the flogging, and each boy was led in and asked whether he stood for rebellion or for order. Then Drury would ask if the boy in question had the key.

Almost all answered that they stood for order, that they themselves did not have the key, but that they were in agreement not to give it up until Butler

had apologized. The only exceptions were a few foundationers, who felt they did not dare to go against the school,—which earned them a remarkable glance from the rector.

By four o'clock it was Geordie's turn to go to Drury. At the same time, Clare, as negotiator for the students, received an ultimatum that no terms would be made until the key was surrendered and the flag hauled up. Otherwise the school would be closed in the morning. Enthusiastic and embittered, the boys resolved to let the ancient school of Harrow be closed.

In the meanwhile, Geordie was replying to the formal questions. To Drury's astonishment he asserted that he had the key. He even admitted to having it in his pocket, but declined to produce it. Dr. Drury considered him long and piercingly. Then, with the reluctance of a man who is faced with two equally unpleasant decisions, he said, "So you have the key, and have the unfortunate temerity to say that you won't produce it? Don't you know, in the first place, that this means you are leading a real rebellion, and will be expelled from this institution immediately?"

"I know, sir," said the Pup, after a little reflection, "but may I speak a moment about something else?"

Drury stared fixedly at the boy.

"The last time you were in London, sir," said Geordie, "Mr. Butler flogged Lord Delaware. The boys wanted to set fire to the class-room. But Clare stopped them."

"What has that to do with the present affair?"

"I will tell you, sir. Clare thought it a shame that all those portraits of the few Clares and a good many more Dorsets and Delawares, who have been at Har-

row, and which are hanging on the walls, should be burned up, too. So we persuaded Delaware to calm himself. When you came back, sir, Mr. Butler apologized, and everything was straightened out again."

During this account, Drury's face assumed a faint red hue, but Geordie sensed that it was not from anger. Drury perceived that the Clare party was not in a position to placate the proletarian Hag with the same considerations. That was natural. But what were they to do? They felt that it was only "fair" to support this boy, in particular, to the utmost, even through rebellion, especially against a proletarian master who had affronted their conceptions of honor. Perfectly proper! Drury was almost moved.

"Oh," he said harshly, "you don't want to give up the key because there are no portraits of Hag's great-grandfather hanging in the school?"

Suddenly he stopped.

"Geordie," he said, "if the key is surrendered in one minute I will speak to Mr. Butler."

"Sir, it will probably have to take a few minutes longer because I must speak to Clare first."

"Tell him," said Drury distractedly, "that I expect him at once."

"Clare," said Geordie to his fag-master a moment later, after calling him out into the corridor, "you must go to Drury now. I think he will arrange everything, if you give him the key. I would have given it to him myself, if I had any idea where it is."

All the glory for settling the affair, and removing Butler from the institution, fell to Clare, and not unjustly. He had managed things very skilfully, and had unfailingly observed the points of honor on

both sides. Upon certain hints from Drury that everything would be arranged satisfactorily, he had had the intelligence to surrender the key without reservations.

In the morning the old Harrovian banner was again flying above the school.

"I say," asked Clare, quite depressed, "what did you tell Drury that he suddenly grew so soft after his hard ultimatum, and everything went as smoothly as if it were greased?"

Geordie told him their conversation.

"I'm sorry, old Baron," said Clare, quite downcast, "that I should run off with all the credit, when you really earned it so well."

Geordie waved his hand. "Tell me, Clare," he said, "why do you call me old Baron?"

Clare was frightfully vexed that he should have made use of that expression at that moment. In embarrassment he began to shift from one leg to the other like a nervous colt before a race. He was ashamed, for it was Hag, and no other, who had invented the nickname.

"It hasn't been very decent of us, I guess," he said, as he confessed the truth about the nickname, "to have used it like the others."

"I say, Clare," said Geordie, with a captivating persuasiveness, after he had pondered over it for a moment, "I'd think it was quite decent if you'd go on calling me that."

"Well," said Clare reflectively, "it really wouldn't be so bad."

Shortly afterwards the holidays began. On the morning of their formal dismissal the four roommates were sitting on the edge of their beds. Peel was remaining at the school since he had no rela-

tives. Two of the others were traveling to Sussex and to Wales. They tossed their fishing-lines and Horaces, together with their sponges and pumps, into a small trunk and, bending over like grazing donkeys, while the blood suffused their faces, glanced between their legs at Geordie, who did not stir, while Peel, grunting under the nearby shower, gave vent to his joy at being able to sleep alone at last, though, as they could see, he was simply miserable at their departure.

"Aren't you packing?"

Geordie shook his head. Clare looked at him somewhat shyly.

The twelve-year-old Duke of Dorset put back his head and clucked like a giraffe, as he always did before he began to speak. His voice was very squeaky and so irresistibly funny, especially as the duke was so lank, that they had long ago given up making jokes about it. The duke, in his underclothes, and not impeccable as to buttons, placed himself before Clare, as if he intended to nibble off a leaf from the tree in front of the window, and said, "The old Baron is expecting his Mammy tomorrow."

Dorset uttered this statement as if through a megaphone, and then cleared his throat loudly.

"But I thought you were going today?" said Clare.

"Not till tomorrow," said Geordie, leaving the bed. "My mother has announced she's coming to fetch me. I will see if I have to fight all Harrow a second time."

The Pup spent his holidays in the neighborhood of Newstead Abbey. As Mammy preferred London to the country, she had let the Abbey to Lord Grey.

But, as she did not know Lord Grey personally, she could not announce herself as a guest at Newstead when Geordie made known his wish to pass the summer there. She rented a farm in the neighborhood, without calling on Lord Grey. Geordie stole around the borders of his peerage, which he could not enter. Still, he could see the tower and, every morning and evening, the trees.

One day Mammy journied to Annesley to pay a visit that was extremely distasteful to her. In Annesley lived the Chaworths; their estate adjoined Newstead; the families were related and, as Geordie would some day occupy the Abbey, Mammy purposed with her visit to get a disagreeable duty out of the way.

In his youth, Geordie's predecessor had killed the father of the present incumbent of Annesley in a duel that looked desperately like a murder. Geordie, who had never seen the villainous old rat-breeder, and was only distantly related to him, could lay the scandal only by a visit.

Mammy made the visit in a bad temper. With time, the persecutory delusion, that she was being spied on from all sides, had become rooted in her. In any case, her destiny had always involved her in tragedy, and, at the moment when she really gained freedom for herself, she was obliged to see that the power belonged, not to her, but to a phantom,—a peerage. With this phantom she waged a desperate struggle. She imagined that everything that happened, though it might be quite in the natural course of things, happened, whenever it involved matters of ceremony or decision, only to humiliate her.

All during the journey to Annesley, the Crow was

enveloped in a cloud that foreboded a storm. But things turned out otherwise.

The people at Annesley were country squires, and a little stiff in their first greetings, but they were obviously kind-hearted, and the visit, though not at all painful, was tedious. Geordie was hardly noticed, and hence Mammy had a pleasant day.

Suddenly the door opened, and a girl in riding habit entered. She had a hunting-rifle over her shoulder, the muzzle downwards, which gave her, in the Pup's eyes, a look of almost superhuman recklessness. Geordie, who did not know, of course, that she had merely been shooting sparrows in the grounds, believed he had never seen a woman who excited him so powerfully. He judged her to be about two years older than himself.

Her gun, her sporting dress, and the boyish arrogance of the girl bewildered him so, that, for a moment, the world went dark before his eyes. During that moment, the girl, who had merely said good-day, went to her room to change her clothes.

In the interval, until she should appear again, Geordie was in a fever. He could not have been more excited had a real Amazon been expected at Harrow, to court him. He succeeded in reaching the Crow's vicinity and questioning her unobserved for a moment. The visit had been so indifferent to him that he had never thought to inquire who, besides the old Chaworths, lived at Annesley, and Mammy in her bad temper had not given him any intimation that the Chaworths had a daughter. Probably, at such a disclosure, the Pup would have jumped out of the coach, and the reconciliation of the two families, between whom a blood-feud

loomed, would never, through Geordie's aversion to little girls, have come to pass.

As it was, he stood before the triumphant Mammy, striving to conceal his excitement, while she herself was gladly exploiting the chance that for once she knew something. But Geordie was disillusioned by what he heard. He learned that Mary Chaworth had been engaged for two years. To do him justice, he was only saddened to hear that she was in love with a notorious blockhead. His brother was at Harrow, while he himself was in the West Indies at the time.

So all was over as far as concerned the nymph of Annesley, who had entered the room, gun in hand, instead of with a lance, in the image of the Delphic caryatid in the lecture-hall at Harrow. He felt ashamed to think that a woman who had made so extremely vivid an impression on his fancy for a moment, was a creature capable of contenting herself with some miserable officer. At that moment he would have been prepared to worship her, if only she had loved a murderer. But how could she lower herself to entertain a passion for a stupid older fellow who had a wretched reputation at Harrow?

When Mary Chaworth returned, Geordie was introduced to her. He was so embarrassed that he left a bad impression with her. He avoided speaking to or looking at her.

Geordie overturned his first goddess with a passion which, by the very pain it caused gave him a certain pleasure. He was glad when at last the Crow ordered her carriage.

As he gave the girl his hand, and, while stiffly bowing, stole a look at her face, he saw how, during the rapid good-bye, she narrowed her left eye just a

flicker and stared fixedly at him. He was so startled by it that he could not sleep all night.

For two days the Pup belabored Annesley with spiteful remarks till the Crow, exasperated, resolved to go there again. What was the boy grumbling at? It had been very nice. She wanted to show him that she, not he, determined their associates.

They arrived at lunch-time, and the Chaworths again showed themselves, as before, so famished for news that they hung on the Crow's lips while she talked of London and Bath.

Geordie was plunged in a brown study the whole day. Although he acted as if he did not give a rap about the girl, he watched her almost incessantly.

At the departure, the seventeen-year-old girl, who now carried no gun on her shoulder, saw to her astonishment that the boy stared her boldly in the eyes and then, with incredible shamelessness, winked his own left eye. Consumed with curiosity, she followed her parents down the footpath, across the lawn, to the wicket-gate, which Geordie's carriage must again pass after circling the grounds.

Old Chaworth bent his pale, hawk-like face a moment, to lay a few roses on Mammy's lap.

At that instant, Mary saw the boy in the carriage open his hand twice, spread his fingers and close them again, a sign which, in its cold calmness, for a second destroyed her self-possession. Then the boy in the carriage motioned with his chin towards the wicket.

Directly after, he turned toward Mammy. Thank heaven, she had seen nothing. Then he turned back quite unflustered. The girl smiled. That brought Geordie to the end of his daring, and he all but fainted.

At home, during dinner, he was so pale that his mother sent him to bed before the cheese. He remained in bed exactly a quarter of a minute, and then clambered cautiously through the ivy and out the window.

When he reached the gates at Annesley around ten o'clock, he was hardly in condition to utter a word.

Without making the slightest reflection on it, he saw Mary standing in the darkness behind the iron gates. He heard her whisper, "Is it you?" and answered, "Yes." Whereupon she opened the gate, and George slipped in. So far he was prepared, but no farther. He stood as stiff as ice. The girl who, from the mingled coolness and daring he had exhibited, must have expected that he would proceed further of his own accord, waited a few moments. But as, at that moment, Geordie drew near to the moon-lit path, she saw that he was very much distracted, and laid it to the distance he had come. But Geordie was utterly unable to say anything appropriate and longed for a pistol, to shoot himself.

The girl walked up and down with him, pressing her lips tightly together and asking him about school in order to bridge the awkward situation. She did not know whether to laugh or to be angry.

After a quarter of an hour, during which Geordie nearly strangled from the throbbing of his heart, he seized the girl's arm and pressed it so tightly that she cried out.

"You're a rude boy," said Mary Chaworth, the peculiar stare coming again into her eyes. "What do you want anyhow?"

That was about the last question the Pup was in a condition to answer. If Mary Chaworth had been three years younger, he would probably have taken

her at once in his arms. Unfortunately he was paralyzed by her superiority. He felt that precisely the lofty treatment she meted out to him aroused him tremendously. At the same time, he determined to break down her superiority. Just then, however, something still prevented him from looking her impudently in the face, gladly as he would have done it. It even prevented him from trembling.

The girl laid her head on one side, and looked at him with an expression he had hitherto seen only in those who were laughing at his foot.

"If you've nothing to say, my dear boy," said Mary pitilessly, "perhaps you won't be angry if I go into the house again. I really don't know," she added, "why I left it."

"Won't you be good enough to wait till tomorrow?" said Geordie slowly.

"Are you intending to come to tea?" asked the girl sarcastically, while she closed the iron gate carefully behind him.

"No," cried Geordie from the other side of the gate, with an intonation that amazed the girl. He had a shamelessly attractive laugh when his teeth showed and, with his flashing eyes and pale forehead, looked fascinating. He took two steps, turned round and gave the girl the same signal as at noon, from the carriage, but with his left hand.

Mary Chaworth went thoughtfully up the steps. Just then she would have been quite content, could she have known whether the boy was playing with her or not.

Geordie stumped back across the fields to his farmhouse, which was a cruel exertion for his foot, but he paid no attention to it. He was too occupied with the question how it was possible for him at

once to despise this girl, who must be a goose since she was engaged to a miserable officer, and yet to be mad about her.

"It's her voice," he said to himself after a while. "I watched her the whole morning. It's only her voice that makes me so crazy."

This knowledge was painfully little help. For it did not explain the helplessness that came over him whenever he stood before her, and which forsook him as soon as an iron gate lay between them. There were some things, he felt, for which he had courage with this girl, and other things which made him afraid of a slap in the face.

He could just as easily have kissed her throat as he had brought her to meet him at night in the park. But why he had not done it was a matter that exercised the Pup considerably.

5.

MELANCHOLY ADVENTURES

NEVERTHELESS, on his way home, he thought, now and again, of little Miss Parker whom he had seen on his first journey to Harrow. Even though he could fall in love with the most amazing rapidity, he yet possessed an obstinate faculty for probing into the causes of his passion. After he had decided that it was Mary's voice that had turned his head, he tried to discover the cause of the little Parker girl's fascination. When he had seen her image in the mirror at Harrow, her figure had been no more clearly outlined to him than a rainbow. Now, as he stumped homewards across the tilled fields, he saw her quite clearly, coming down the steps again; she smiled and finally held out her hand to him. In his fancy, she was so close to him that he could gaze into her face, and even had a feeling of her warmness. Surely it was her skin that had impressed him, or rather, the transparency of her skin.

He sensed nuances with clearness and precision. The transparency of her skin gave little Miss Parker just that angelic grace with which she had remained hovering about the steps.

When he compared the disturbing impression he had then had with the one he had had that day, his conclusions seemed very accurate. For with Mary's voice, the Parker girl would never have enthralled him so; one feature precluded the other. On the other hand, it was impossible for him to imagine Mary, who always came to his mind with a gun over

her shoulder and the attitude of a sportswoman with one foot in her stirrup, with the delicacy of little Miss Parker.

Yet whenever he recalled Mary's voice, as he did then, jumping over a small ditch, he began to tremble and grew quite wet with the sweat that poured from him. The intoxication of that memory was the most blissful thing in the world.

The next day he could hardly wait for the rendezvous, and he went to it with the firm determination to prove himself more collected this time.

Unfortunately Miss Chaworth played him a trick. The girl had more years to her credit than Geordie, but no more experience than any other engaged young girl. She had no intention of falling in love with the boy, but she wanted to make sure which of them was playing with the other, and let the Pup wait for ten minutes outside the locked garden gate while she watched him from the shrubbery.

Geordie lived through all the disillusionments in the world when he did not find the girl there. When at last she did open the gate, Miss Chaworth could have "played" as much as she liked with the dark, defiant figure outside. She could just as well have "played" with one of the statues on the grounds.

"Have you finally thought over what you want to say to me?" she asked as he slipped in. The strength of a Hercules would not have given him the power to say that he was in love with her.

"Certainly," he replied, while he felt himself like one of those Roman boys who faced Hannibal, unarmed, "I've thought it over."

Mary, who felt sure of her case, turned aside to conceal her smile.

"Well, well, I'm all excited."

"Why?"

"Lord, you're funny. Well, tell me."

"I know that I seem silly enough to you," he said bitterly, "but I think that for me it's rather sad than funny."

To the girl, the boy seemed suddenly rather sinister. She had stationed her maid close at hand, with instructions to call her at the end of ten minutes, when Mary would herself decide whether to notice the call or not.

Presently the maid called.

Mary answered the call at a moment when she was just as far as on the previous night from understanding this boy, who so persistently and so enigmatically pursued her.

Geordie returned home in despair.

Next day the Chaworths paid them a visit. The girl, who meant to end this weird business with the Pup, dropped one of her fiance's letters in the garden. Geordie, thinking it was meant for him, picked it up and read it. That night the Crow had to swathe her son in cold compresses and put him to bed.

Mary Chaworth, who, from curiosity, went out into the park, waited for the Pup in vain. He could not rush to her through the woods, for Mammy was sitting on his bed, and ice was plastered on his forehead. The boy was sick with a passion that took the form of fever.

"I really didn't think you'd put me through this, too, Geordie," she said, "and get sick. At least your father spared me that."

She could not suspect that Geordie, who was lying there with his hands clenched and his face white, on

the sheet before her, was only wishing that his mother's bad temper could kill him.

The next morning he was walking in the garden again, though his whole body was trembling. The Crow gladly permitted herself to be deceived. At nine o'clock the Pup jumped out of the window and ran off to Annesley. It was a life and death matter to him.

Young Miss Chaworth, who, disturbed by the news of Geordie's illness, was again lingering by the gate, suddenly beheld him standing before her.

When she saw his deathly pale face, she laid her hand on his head and drew the boy's lips to her own. He was so numbed by passion that his whole body felt frozen, while his lips possessed a fire that overwhelmed the girl at one blow. No bored woman could have experienced so unrestrained an avowal of passion, and not have fallen in love.

Luckily for young Miss Chaworth, his impenetrable shyness prevented the boy from hazarding too obvious caresses. Mary, who had all but lost her senses, thereby recovered herself sufficiently to draw back.

Geordie returned home in a state of semi-bliss. But he had not yet proved himself to himself.

During the next few days Mary was away on a visit at a party in the country. They had arranged a day when they would see one another again. But Geordie's holidays ended without the meeting taking place.

A thunderstorm prevented Mary from leaving the house, while Geordie soon drowned in the torrents of water at the gate.

From Harrow Geordie wrote letters far more daring than his actions would have led one to expect.

For, when he got back to Harrow it seemed to him as if he had never before lived.

The affair with Mary was to him no adventure. He had come into contact with a whole world which gave him no more rest, but drew his whole being on with a powerful sweetness he could not explain.

He could not even tell if it was little Miss Parker or young Miss Chaworth that gave him such bliss when he closed his eyes. In the depths of his being the question of which of them it was did not even play a part. For he was in the presence of a different life that even in thought left him breathless. It was glorious.

This impression was so strong that it took away the value of nearly everything that happened at Harrow. He could think of nothing but getting back to Annesley.

During the winter Geordie made up his deficiencies. He achieved the standing of the average students. Probably it would have been better if he had not now and then come distracted and unprepared to class. In all fields of general education he was well ahead of his schoolmates. It was astonishing how much the Pup had read hodge-podge in London, and which he now attempted to sort out.

His relations with Dr. Drury were ambiguous. Geordie was not in a position to judge the fluctuations of the man's reserve, and the interest of the master seemed to him rather like the emanations from an ice-cake, to which he was supposed to show respect. For the rest, his thoughts were seldom on the present or the school. In his plans he was already a man, and, having nibbled at life, never troubled himself to give more than half a thought to Harrow.

In the summer he journeyed down to the farm with Dorset, and the next day they were already taking tea at Annesley. This time when Geordie saw Mary entering the room, he was able to smile and chat affably with her, which made him somewhat surer of himself.

"No one could ever tell from looking at me that I have kissed this girl," he thought.

Unluckily for him, the Chaworths were holding a big reception that afternoon, and by accident the duke was not introduced to their daughter. The duke, who had an inexplicable partiality for rare species of birds, and at home kept something like a hundred specimens, made everyone who stood near him look ridiculous by his unusual height. He had a way of speaking that ended as abruptly as it began. He knew neither commas nor pauses.

All the temperament he possessed was expressed in his loyalty to Geordie. In his mind, the Pup, who, at the very beginning at Harrow, had taken him into his dormitory, played exactly the same role as Napoleon in the Pup's. For Geordie, Dorset would have let his legs be cut off at the knees, without permitting it to stop any sentence he happened to be embarked on.

In Geordie's mind, on the other hand, the duke played Oliver to his Roland. He made use of him for everything, for Latin exercises, as groom, as second, as spy, and as diplomat.

It never occurred to him that that day the duke would do him the very opposite of good.

When, towards evening, Dorset was finally introduced to young Miss Chaworth, she immediately asked him where in the vicinity he was putting up, for she was astonished to meet, in a circle where

everyone knew everybody else, even to the cut of his pyjamas, a Dorset of whose existence she had no suspicion.

But, as Dorset could not, at the moment, remember what the manor was called at which he had arrived the previous evening, he could not give her any exact information.

"Perhaps you can remember in whose carriage you came?" said the girl, smiling.

Dorset reared up on his hind-legs, uttered an irresistible noise in his throat, and with his eyes on a cloud that went sailing over the garden, said sarcastically:

"Luckily I *can* remember that at least, Miss Chaworth. I came over with the old Baron."

Mary Chaworth cocked her head on one side like an inquisitive bird.

"What?" she said. "I really don't understand who that is."

"My fag-master," said Dorset coldly.

When Mary Chaworth, annoyed, began to laugh at this answer, of which she really did not understand a word, the offended Dorset took no further part in the conversation.

He was accustomed to having the slang of Harrow and Cambridge understood by all the smartest people in England, and he thought this little goose, who did not take him seriously, "simply a provincial." In the family of Dorset no one spoke in any other way.

Young Miss Chaworth, on her part, angered by the arrogant clown, rushed about, trying to find out who the idiotic Dorset's old Baron and fag-master were, and eventually discovered Admiral Dott who explained the slang to her.

As the whole tea party was thus brought into contact with the customs of Harrow, Geordie already cut a rather humorous figure before his name was detached from his nickname. Geordie's appearance in this rural milieu, where he had arrived with the most audacious hopes, the duke had managed to make ridiculous by noon.

Geordie, who had no idea of the devastation wrought in little Miss Chaworth's heart, at least as far as his passion was concerned, by Dorset's manly loyalty, retired after his dinner at the farm, complaining of migraine.

"Listen," he said to the Duke for the tenth time, "you must contradict Mammy, no matter what she says about me. Contradict all the time, or she'll probably come up here to see how I am."

Dorset nodded and helped Geordie out the window.

Five minutes later Dorset, like a true partisan, sat by the hearth, prepared to swear that Dr. Drury was a woman, if only Geordie's mother said he was a man. Unfortunately, they had neither of them considered that the Crow might simply ask questions.

"Is Geordie diligent?" asked the Crow, while she mixed him a whisky and soda.

"Yes," answered Dorset.

For a moment she held the hand with the glass in the air, and stared at him.

"Just how popular is he?" continued the Crow. "His father was especially popular with his comrades."

The Duke began to sweat blood. How was he to contradict that? After a time he decided to say that Geordie was popular.

"Oh," said the Crow. "Mr. Butler wrote me to the contrary not long ago."

"Mr. Butler," said Dorset, who suddenly felt in his element, "is a vulgar idiot."

The Crow gazed at the boy a long time, but he did not stir. A certain distrust appeared in the Crow's eyes.

"Just when do you get up at Harrow?" she asked in so terribly harmless a tone, that the Duke, who understood birds' voices perfectly, was frozen with horror.

"Very early," he said slowly, "about six o'clock."

"That is hardly possible," said the Crow sarcastically. "Geordie himself wrote me that you sometimes sleep till ten."

"In that case Geordie lied," said Dorset, at last able to follow his instructions. He became quite chipper.

"What is that you say?" cried the Crow. "Do you mean to say that Geordie does not tell the truth? As a friend of his, will you repeat that?"

"I'll bet that he lies," said Dorset coolly.

At that instant there was a terrible crash. Dorset, who had never yet encountered any ladies in his family who smashed fruit plates on the table when they received an answer which did not please them, escaped with one enormous bound.

When the Crow had composed herself again, she saw that her spontaneous movement had shattered one of the finest pieces of the family service. She was now certain that she had been somehow deceived. When she found Geordie's room empty her rage redoubled.

"I saw through that giraffe at once," she said, in the direction of the vanished duke. "He's too stupid to lie properly."

After this frightful insult, she directed her anger against Geordie. She was suddenly convinced that he was with her maids. For a half hour she heaped all possible coals on his head, not caring especially whether he was there or not. She had contracted this habit since Geordie was at Harrow. After the tirade the Crow suddenly sank into day-dreams. She retired, as Dorset observed from the garden, to her bedroom.

When Geordie returned about one o'clock, Dorset, at the garden gate, said at once, "Old Baron, your mother has found out everything."

"I don't care."

It was quite all right with him. But, in the hope of laying any scandal at once, he went immediately to Mammy's room. To his astonishment, he found her in a tender mood, and grateful to him for coming to see her so late.

"Were you out walking again?"

"Yes, Mammy."

She did not say a word about what had occurred, for in the interval the Crow had been thinking of the past. Every reminder of the Captain made her melancholy. But always when she met the Captain again in thought, the result was that she again fell in love with him, though he had already been dead some dozen years. This had radically changed her mood.

When Geordie was at the door, she called him back. "You have a remarkably entertaining attaché," she said. "He spent the whole evening trying to convince me that you are an early riser."

"He's very stupid," said Geordie, though his heart bled at having to betray his fellow conspirator.

Geordie immediately sought the duke in his room.

"Dorset," he said, dropping into a chair, "didn't I tell you that you must contradict her all the time?"

"Old Baron," replied Dorset to this temperate accusation, while he raised from the pillows that head, upon which no god had shed his blessings, "then you would have had your mirror smashed, at least."

Only at lunch next day, and then incidentally, did the Crow ask where the Pup had been. Geordie avenged himself on her by telling so impossible a story about his migraine and the walk he had taken, that the duke gasped in amazement. But neither of his auditors suspected how wretched he was.

This time the Pup had gone to Annesley with the intention of seducing Mary Chaworth. For a whole year the eighteen-year-old girl had excited his fancy. The adventure was to be the test by which he would prove himself.

With his heart pounding, he reached the park gates, but, when he heard her whisper, all his designs and daring plans were dead. His delight in her presence bewildered him so that he lost all courage for any boldness.

Fortunately the girl took him into her arms at once. The handsome, trembling youth was an inflaming pleasure to young Miss Chaworth, who wanted nothing more, at bottom, than that his lips should recall to her joys shared with her fiance, whom Geordie despised. She was too limited to sense what potentialities for love the boy's mute passion veiled.

Moreover, as with all women who love partial excitement, it gave her almost as much pleasure to bewilder the boy, as to let herself be vanquished by him.

As soon as she observed that Geordie was proud

of having, with Dorset, put through a particularly daring plan, she did not hesitate to let him know that his scarecrow of a friend was making him ridiculous. Even less would have sufficed to silence the Pup. After this disillusionment, all his old apathy and shyness set in again.

He had a feeling of aversion to the girl because of her naive and childish way of amusing herself about Harrow, but he was too far gone in love to take much heed of it. He hardly even noticed the girl's lack of manner. He was so in love with her voice that he would have obeyed her, no matter what stupidity she had commanded of him.

He was much too inexperienced to know that excitations, such as Mary practiced, are meaningless, coming from a country miss.

In short, the Pup was again hopelessly enmeshed in the eroticism of this girl who was basically cold and incapable of love. When he came home the first night he was so depressed that Mammy herself, with a little skill, could have had the whole story from him.

His relations with young Miss Chaworth made no further progress during the rest of the vacation. They remained as they were. Geordie felt the girl's body in his finger tips as he paced to and fro in his farmhouse garden. But he did not possess her. Their whole great passion never got beyond a few kisses, cleverly broken off by Mary, and certain excitations that drove him half mad.

Unfortunately he laid all the blame at his own door. He lacked every criterion, and the experience in love, that would have enabled him to ascribe the things, that paralyzed his instinct in Mary Chaworth's presence, to the girl herself.

Like all young persons with organisms extremely susceptible to love, he observed only himself. Hence he saw only his own constant failure. At last he was firmly convinced that he could not love.

When the holidays ended, he had never really talked anything but stupid nonsense with her. Yet, when he returned to Harrow, he was still in love with her. He began to imagine that he might have been more courageous with little Miss Parker. The idea gave him so much comfort that for a while he lost his depression, until he learned that months before, as the result of a fall which injured her spine, the little girl had died.

He was deeply shocked by this news, which turned the world black before his eyes. For a few days he remained abstracted, without exchanging a word even with his friends. It was no longer necessary for him to cover his mirror. But at the end of a fortnight, as a direct result of the news, his mind went back exclusively to Mary.

Shortly afterwards, however, he heard that the despised officer had returned to marry her. That caused her to fall very low indeed in his eyes. By accident he heard also, from Dorset, that she had once quite harmlessly made fun of his foot. That was probably the worst that a beloved woman could do to the Pup, for by it she wounded him in more than his pride, she wounded him in his life's most vulnerable point, and thereby showed herself lacking in generosity.

At this time he often sat on the bridge which led to the cemetery, and would gladly have let everything go to smash. He felt himself completely betrayed. A maddening passion had been aroused in

him and had not been appeased, and at his age that was a little too much altogether.

Geordie mused. He loved two women, of whom one was dead, while the other he despised. At the same time he knew that his contempt could not help him much as long as he remembered her voice.

But he was brave enough, in the long run, simply to remember that she was the wife of a man whose brother could neither ride nor understand a line of Horace, and who lived in the room next his.

This young man never discovered why Geordie often sought him out, and was friendlier to him than to most of the Harrow boys who did not belong to his own set. Geordie gloated over him, for the boy was terribly stupid. And his brother was said to be even stupider!

When Geordie shortly afterwards went up to Cambridge he knew well enough that the whole long-drawn affair with Miss Chaworth had done him no credit, and that, fortunately, it was over. Where passion was concerned he did not have much of an opinion of himself. But he bore this scar like his others. It did not prevent him traveling his own road in his own way.

Nevertheless, at night and in tears, he often beheld little Miss Chaworth's lovely face. Geordie belonged to those grateful lovers who remain faithful to the happy hours, even though they have thrust the bringer of those hours out of their heart.

6.

THE TEAM

So the Pup went up to Cambridge in partial bankruptcy of spirit, and with two servants.

His complicated financial situation had improved in the meanwhile. He possessed two large, but poorly managed, estates, and several coal pits, concerning which he was involved in several law suits. His predecessor had treated the whole property, which included a street of houses, with so much indifference, that there was no longer any income to be had out of it. He had even illegally broken the entail by selling the best part of the mines, and that had to be settled under great difficulties. Nevertheless, the whole peerage represented a capital of more than a million dollars. But the circumstances were such that at times there were vast sums in cash, at others nothing at all.

Geordie immediately delivered a letter of introduction to "Small" Hobhouse, a Cambridge student to whom Clare had referred him. He added to this letter the ambitious wish that Hobhouse, who was captain of one of the best athletic squads in Cambridge, should ask him into his team.

While he was waiting for Hobhouse to come down, he stood in a corridor of the college, with his two Newfoundlands, and stared out the window into a court where the students were loitering in recess.

They wandered about the grounds in a quite coquettishly sporty way. They had taken off their

coats and hung them over their left shoulders, while they thrust their chests out as far as possible. At the same time they held their shoulders as delicately poised as Greek boxers do, in their statues. Their gait, on the other hand, was extremely saggy at the knees, and they shuffled their feet in a slovenly way, apparently to show that they set no value at all on being as highly trained as their swelling torsos so pompously proclaimed. Wild youths, God knows!

At the sight of this colony of arrogant athletes, Geordie grew more diffident than he had expected to be, though their way of walking would conceal his lameness.

Five minutes later some one hailed him.

A tall sunburned youth, with his very fair hair combed back, was standing behind him.

When Geordie looked at him, his first impression was how perfectly finished that lean, lank body was. It was like a horse that shows its breed rather by its twitchings than by its muscularity. Yet obviously this body was all sinew.

Only then, did Geordie look at the face of his interlocutor. The young athlete had a hooked nose and deeply hollow cheeks.

"Lord B.?" he asked again. "Hobhouse," he added for himself.

Geordie nodded. They shook hands.

"Nice of you to bring your introduction to us before going to your tutor," he said. He took Geordie by the arm and led him into a little waiting room. Of asking him into the team he did not say a word.

During the first week, while the Pup was getting himself adjusted to Cambridge, no one ever mentioned a "team," and Geordie grew more downcast from day to day. He realized that, unless he joined

a team, he would play at Cambridge a role that was impossible with his ambitions, and he was on the point of packing up and leaving. Yet he knew with certainty that Clare, in writing to Hobhouse, had given explicit information about his sporting abilities and his wishes.

But Hobhouse mentioned nothing about this, though he overlooked none of the amenities. He invited Geordie to his room every day, and Geordie spent eight evenings at the team's fireside without once hearing a word of the achievements or even the existence of the team.

He already regretted that he had not gone to Oxford.

The views on education of these two famous universities are so firmly rooted in tradition, that they differ only in nuances. Both educate, at one and the same time, scholars and athletes. Sometimes Oxford concentrates more on the academic result, and Cambridge on the production of athletes, and sometimes for a generation it is the other way round.

At the time when Geordie went up to Cambridge, the tutors were inclined to smile at too strong an inclination to learning, while the Oxford highbrows made merry over Cambridge brawn.

Geordie noticed that, oddly enough, Hobhouse's team consisted of younger men who, strictly speaking, belonged at Oxford. Two of them, at eighteen years of age, gave evidences of a mental capacity unusual at Cambridge.

Hobhouse was the youngest and, probably, the most cultured of them, but good form did not allow him to show it. He wore a mask that very artfully concealed him. His hooked nose, and the deep lines from it to the corners of his mouth, gave him essen-

tially a withered look; indeed, when he was alone, it often struck Geordie that he looked like an overtrained old man, with his prominent cheek-bones, though he was tanned a dark brown.

But when Hobhouse laughed, he possessed all Clare's charm, in fact, he was as much more charming than Clare as he was more intelligent. As Hobhouse was always smiling, he was reputed the politest man in Cambridge, but no amount of artfulness could ever prevail against that smile, for it was endlessly shrewd.

The second man was Lord Folkestone, who was writing a thesis in Latin. The fashion at Cambridge had apparently led him to choose a profession quite contrary to his inclinations, for he was preparing to become a naval officer. He was considered very haughty because he was very handsome. He had the classic figure, narrow hips and broad shoulders, with the radiant face of antiquity. He was at least a head taller than Geordie.

The third man was Noel Long. Luckily he was wholly and solely a swimmer. At dinner he always ordered a leg of mutton in order to be able to make the same joke about it.

When Geordie watched them at practice, he noticed that these young men specialized, so that in the total score of any competition they might win the most points for their side. Folkestone was the exponent of the "dry" sports, while Long starred only in the water. Hobhouse, as captain, was doing nothing for the present.

These young men kept Geordie on hot coals until they had informed themselves about his qualifications. Geordie was very unassuming, but when he swam it was at a deadly pace. That he had horse

sense, Hobhouse soon perceived. He showed up best at pistol-shooting and riding, but he soon sensed that the Cambrensians, who were obsessed by the water, did not really appreciate dry sports. That first week, when the Pup felt he was being observed, without anyone's allowing him to see that he was, was a dreadful one for Geordie's self-respect. He imagined that it would be the bitterest moment of his life if they should not accept him.

The team was obviously not agreed in the matter.

To secure team work, Hobhouse needed a broader basis for his team than three men, and considered the Pup altogether from that strategic viewpoint.

But the other two did not express themselves. Folkestone took Geordie for an arrogant dolt. Long regarded him more kindly, as his work in the river pleased him, but he had no idea what they would do with the Pup since the water events fell to him anyway. But, in any case, he had never seen Geordie dive. Diving was Long's own weak point, for he saw badly under water.

From the first, Hobhouse was predisposed to Geordie, without ever, for so much as a moment, attempting to influence the others. He simply informed them of Geordie's wish.

Folkstone, on the other hand, thought the Pup moody, because Geordie, in his embarrassment at his first introduction to the clubroom, had greeted him coolly. The Pup made many friends and many enemies at Cambridge, according as he had a smiling or a haughty expression on his face when introduced. And he really had no more control of one than of the other, for his expression made itself. It formed itself on some instinctive signal from the character of the other person. Hence it was fre-

quently wrong. But this habit, which was a mystery to himself, made a definite impression on the other fellows.

"Well," said Hobhouse, one evening a week later, when the team were sitting round his fire, "shall we take the boy?"

Long, who was making a hideous noise on the piano, stopped for a moment.

"As 'wet' bob?" he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Bosh!"

"Good," said Folkestone, "we'll take him as 'dry' bob."

"It's all one with me," said Long, whom only the water interested, and who was less liberal than Folkestone, though the latter had at first thought Geordie dreadful.

Thereupon he opened the door. Behind it in the passage stood three figures. These were their servants. They arrived in the morning and stationed themselves outside the door, where they remained, looking like an avenue of strayed statues. In reality they had nothing to do but to show that the youths, who lived in these holes, could equally well have afforded something better.

"Fletcher," said Hobhouse in a kindly tone," fetch your infant over here."

Fletcher, with his usual deeply offended look, went down the passage. He had very long arms but no neck, and a very large head, which he could never turn without turning his shoulders as well. He was part of the legacy of the mad owner of Newstead Abbey, and though he had abetted the old rogue in a number of things, was passionately devoted to the family. He belonged to that legendary race of servants, who are often more cultivated than

their masters, but consider it a virtue to allow themselves to be poisoned for those same masters' sakes. He had one fault. He expressed himself in too refined a manner, and could not endure being treated in any vulgar way.

"Pardon, Geordie," said Hobhouse as Geordie entered. "You wish to become a member of our team. I should like to say that that would give us great pleasure. Eh, what?"

He looked at Long and Folkestone. They nodded. For an instant they both thought what a stir their taking a cripple into their team would cause at Cambridge.

"Good," said Long.

They shook hands with him.

It had occurred to Long that in Geordie he would have a better training partner than any he knew at Cambridge.

Folkestone leaned against the mantelpiece. "Yes," he said coolly, "though there is still a word or two to be said about his position in the team."

Geordie motioned Fletcher to come in with the tea things. He could just as well have let him stay at the door, but his excitement was so great that he felt he had to do something.

"The tea is from Clare," said Hobhouse, who observed that Geordie was alternately blushing and going white, "I will give you another kind. This one has an awful bouquet. So then, you'll be good enough to train as a rider, won't you? We'll decide exactly what each of us is to do."

But in a week's time the team itself was all for having Geordie practice diving and pistol-shooting. Long himself made the suggestion. He did not like diving very much.

But the deciding factor was Geordie's fanaticism, which the other three watched grow from day to day, with amazement. He improved so much in shooting, though his right hand trembled, that in the cup finals a little later, he shot off the heads of the fowls that were to be served at dinner.

All his life Geordie remembered the evening when the team accepted him.

As a member of this interesting team, the Pup felt the sense of freedom that Cambridge gave, doubled. There was no extreme to which he would not go. At the same time his manner became less agreeable. He acquired a monkey and used to take it for a walk in the town occasionally.

Barely a month later, when he discovered that most of the students had their own lodgings, he sent Fletcher to London to arrange bachelor's quarters for him in Piccadilly. Yet for six months at least he would have no opportunity of going to London, and he lived in mortal dread that Mammy might discover those quarters, which he considered necessary and stylish although his mother had a whole house in London.

"The old Baron is still somewhat young," said Folkestone to Hobhouse one day.

They looked at one another for a moment.

"Excuse me, Geordie," said Hobhouse coming up to Geordie's room that evening and knocking. "I don't want to disturb you. Tell me frankly if I do."

"Come in, Hob," said Geordie, "and tell me what you want."

"I wanted to ask for your nice, showy yellow cravat for the students' play."

The Pup had already noticed that when Hobhouse was particularly affable, he was really calling his

attention to something. Geordie resolved never again to wear cravats of that hue.

"You were wonderful, old Baron," said Hobhouse after the show. "You must have rehearsed your part at the bumping races."

On the previous day Geordie had rushed along the bank of the river with a mob of students and bellowed at the top of his lungs, to encourage Long and Folkestone who were rowing.

He sensed that in Hobhouse's opinion what was good for a boat race was not absolutely requisite to Euripides.

While Fletcher was arranging Geordie's pied-a-terre in London, and nothing in the world interested the Pup so much as the business of lodgings, Hobhouse said one day at breakfast, "Geordie,"—and he bowed across the table,—"will you have tea with me this afternoon?"

"Certainly, Hob," said Geordie, astonished at so much ceremony.

When he knocked at Hobhouse's door that afternoon, he learned for the first time, from the servant, that Hob had a house in town. In addition to his college lodgings, Hobhouse had owned this house the whole time, without ever mentioning it.

Geordie felt himself a perfect fool that afternoon, with his lodgings in London to which he could not go. It turned out that Hobhouse had invited some girls, as well as the rest of the team, but as the undergraduates sat as stiff as wooden images, the tea party rather resembled a funeral gathering. With women of this type nearly all the young athletes remained somewhat uneasy. Even Long had the feeling that he was doing something forbidden. And yet they were all up to their eyes in love and acted

like puppies. Geordie was the only one who was really cold. Neither the apparent venality of the girls nor the odor of potential sins that enveloped them, allured or frightened him off, though the others were obviously infected by the atmosphere. Geordie soon grew melancholy and went away depressed.

The idea that he was incapable of loving grew deeper and deeper in him, and it required all his energy not to show it.

A short time after this tea, the Pup, thoughtlessly and unintentionally, and, indeed, without noticing it, sent a bullet through the hat of a lady who was passing through the college grounds. She screamed so loudly that Fletcher, who was holding the pistol case, threw it down and rushed after her to see where she was hit. He could discover nothing more than a damaged coiffure.

Geordie was horrified.

"If I had shot her," he said, turning pale, "I don't think I should ever have had another moment's peace."

"Bosh," said Long. "Quite different kinds of death have been accomplished, in your family, without the participants losing a wink of sleep over it."

"I'm afraid, Geordie," said Hobhouse, "that instead of philosophizing with Long, you'll have to go make your apologies."

"On my knees," cried Geordie laughing, and, in gratitude for Hob's well concealed humanity, making a gesture like Apollo before Daphne as she was turning into a tree. At that moment it seemed to him as if even Hob's lean limbs were about to bourgeon and bloom.

That was the beginning of a love-affair that lasted

nearly a week. That it did not last longer was the fault of the young lady herself. She was the widow of an officer, killed in war, and was not much older than the young Cambridgian. Geordie went to see her once or twice, and took her on the river.

It annoyed the youth that she exaggerated almost everything, which, with her prettiness, was unnecessary. Now that her excitement at being shot was past, she began to treat the knight of the pistol as though he had saved her life. But as Geordie knew well enough he had not hit her, he was irritated at this interpretation. Had she been ever so much more lovely it would not have availed. He stayed away.

"I cannot love," he said bitterly. "It's a long time since I've thought of Mary. And why doesn't this girl please me? She is even," he added meditatively, "said to swim well."

Geordie decided definitely that he was cold.

7.

GIRL AS BOY

One Saturday morning Geordie was riding along the river, looking for Long, who was out sculling, when his horse suddenly put its foot in a rabbit hole and went lame. The Pup led it by its bridle for a while, looking for a bit of shade for the exhausted creature, but could find nothing but a farmhouse. In the yard was a well, and Geordie went into the house to ask for some implement, for it seemed to him that the horse was acting more as if a nail were hurting it than a sprain.

As he emerged from the smoky hall again, he saw that the horse had got to its feet, arching its neck gracefully, and that a girl was standing beside it, one hand laid on its withers, the other rubbing the creature's underlip.

"Be careful that it doesn't stamp on your feet," said Geordie.

The girl turned, glanced at her bare legs, and at Geordie, and revealed two rows of teeth, which, in spite of their regularity and beauty, were as pointed as those of a rodent. Her eyes showed frank amusement that the young man thought the animal could hurt her.

The horse acted with this girl, with the tiny mouth and wide, dark-brown forehead, as it would have with a stallion. The mare trembled and drew herself up, tense and beautiful, under the hands that lay on her back and at her mouth.

The girl was just as slim as a young Cambridge

athlete; her shoulders, especially, were high and broad and she had hardly any hips. Moreover, her head was remarkably well poised on her neck. When Geordie looked at the expression on her face, he received a painful shock, for at first the girl looked at him exactly as if she were some phantom of his mind.

He came so close to her that she pressed back against the horse, for fear that he wanted to seize her.

"What's your name?" asked Geordie, tying up the horse.

"Bobby," said the girl.

Geordie picked up the horse's foot, held it against his thigh and lifted the hoof.

"Of course," he said, "it's a stupid nail that's hurting the poor brute. Hold the leg for a minute."

While he loosened the shoe from the hoof with a knife, the girl held the horse's leg, and, in spite of the pain, the animal stood without moving.

"That will do," said Geordie, when the nail was out, and hunted through his pockets for something to give the girl. He had forgotten to take any money along. After reflecting a moment, he said, "Be at the door at ten. I'll come by and bring you something."

"Will you bring the horse?"

"Of course."

"If you bring the horse with you, I'll be there. You can keep your money."

"What a young savage," thought Geordie as he got home that night. She could hardly say one sentence correctly. Her way of speaking was atrociously common. But from where had she got her

body with its long hands? The best thing would be to take her a riding habit.

"I'll leave the horse here for you," he said, as he left her that evening after his first rendezvous. He was very well pleased with himself.

He found it very amusing in the weeks that followed, teaching her to ride, for she learned very quickly and made the drollest remarks while doing so. Even Mammy would have torn her hair, could she have heard this girl's power of expressing herself with a vocabulary which certainly did not total a thousand words.

She was a slim, lovely creature, even quite spruce, only he had the impression that she loved his horse more than him. But, after all, Geordie, as he well knew, had more experience with horses.

When Bobby galloped beside him on his nag, her features peeping out of his riding-habit, his teeth chattered with bliss. He found her much more attractive then than when he took her in his arms.

This surburban affair went on for a long time unknown to Cambridge. Hobhouse first discovered it when Geordie borrowed one of his horses, so that the little brown beast might always have two nags to ride, in her stable. The girl's mother prayed for the Pup every night, for, thanks to his generosity, which in any case, hardly cost him more than his daily sandwiches, she no longer had any rent to pay. Bobby, on the other hand, had so natural a contempt for money that she was absolutely unvenal.

Bobby ordinarily rode astride; and she also had her hair cropped very short. Hobhouse, who met her for the first time quite accidentally, when she was out riding with the Pup, needed all his politeness to keep him from falling out of the saddle when

he heard Bobby speak. She had a rather hoarse voice and called him "old bones." The Pup was immensely delighted by the way Bobby treated Hobhouse.

"Is it really a girl?" asked Long, after he had seen the two of them fly past as he sculled upstream. "I'll drink a bottle of castor oil if that isn't a boy."

"It's a girl right enough," said Folkestone. "And the old Baron is simply wild about her."

"I'm afraid he's a bit crazy," said Hobhouse calmly

"Hob," said Geordie that evening, "will you do me a great favor?"

Hobhouse smiled with all that generous manner that was, at the same time, his greatest defense. His willingness showed in the lines of his bronzed and youthful face as they deepened up to his pointed eyebrows, that spread like two swallow's wings, at the base of his brow.

"Any time, old Baron. Out with it," said Hobhouse, a little breathlessly.

"You've received an invitation—and so have I—," said the Pup, "to a fox hunt at old General Doyle's. Now I'm sure you will find it as great a bore as picking raspberries. Nevertheless, I'd be very grateful if you'd go with me."

"But I say," said Hobhouse, counting on his fingers, "that's during vacation."

"Hob," cried the Pup eagerly, "I'll send a carriage for you, for I want you without fail."

It was no use for Hobhouse to find the request a little odd; he had to agree, even though he refused the carriage, for it was the most impossible thing in the world for him to refuse a favor.

But when, a fortnight later in London, Geordie

came to fetch him a day earlier than he intended to go, Hobhouse was really provoked. It showed itself in a rather irritable amiability.

He soon remarked that the carriage was making an elaborate detour to reach the General's estate. Then the Pup confessed that he was taking Bobby to the hunt as a member of their Cambridge team.

"You don't suppose," said Hobhouse, "that I'm going to play any such game with you?" It was no longer a joke.

"I did think so," said the Pup.

Hobhouse's eyebrows flitted up on his forehead like twin petrels against a storm-cloud.

"What does it matter," continued the Pup, "if people take her for a boy. And you know, Hobby," he added in a tone which touched Hobhouse, "there aren't any hunts in our neighborhood except at this old idiot's. And even if it is cheek, I'm really only taking her because she has horse sense. Why shouldn't such a girl have a chance to take part in a hunt. You're just the person who ought to understand that, Hob."

The Pup had passed over to the offensive. Nothing was more moving to Hobhouse than an appeal to his sportingness. The Pup was attacking it with both fists.

"My dear fellow," said Hobhouse, in this difficult situation, "it isn't a matter of cheek, if it's properly managed, and you can do it or not, as you like. But I should never even dream of introducing a girl, as a member of our team, to old Doyle, who is so deaf that he can't understand a word you say to him."

And he remained of that opinion, while the veins stood out on the Pup's forehead with anger, though he did not say a word.

But Hobhouse could not prevent their all three arriving together, though when the footman opened the carriage door, he pressed his hand against his stomach, as though he had a cramp, and rushed wanly up the stairs.

The Pup made his introductions casually and then hastily retired with his friend to his room. At the dinner which followed the fox-hunt, his team-mate was a mild sensation.

"How is it," asked the white-haired Chancellor of the Exchequer, who sat at the farther end of the board, speaking across the table, "how is it that such a horrible dialect is now spoken at Cambridge?" And he inclined a big red ear in the direction whence Bobby's voice sliced through the conversation with an unmistakable oath.

The dread moment had come, could no longer be avoided, but the brave Hob raised his voice to cloak with his generosity an imposture, which, from the bottom of his heart, he felt to be unfair and tactless.

"Our friend on the team, Noel Long, here," he said smilingly, "was born in the West Indies, and for a long while had a horrible nurse. But we'll soon knock it out of him," he added, laughing as gaily as he could in Bobby's direction.

She, however, strangely excited by all the attention, turned round and stuck out her tongue at him.

"In my time," explained the member from the exchequer to the attentive Hobhouse, "Cambridge manners were not so free. But ideas," he added thoughtfully, "change."

Long got the greatest enjoyment out of this affair, when Hobhouse told him the story of the hunt in London.

"My aunt was certainly at the meet," he said, "for

she is old Doyle's nearest neighbor. She probably did not make herself known for reasons, and there will be a lovely scandal for the old Baron to clear up about the odd nephew he has presented my family."

In fact all three waited for a protest from the old lady concerning the local dialect of her young relative. But the Pup was lucky, for on the day of the fox-hunt the old lady had gone to bed with her sciatica.

At Cambridge, on the other hand, the story made a stir in Geordie's favor. Even Folkestone, who was the most reserved towards the Pup, acknowledged Geordie's dash, in contrast to Hobhouse, who had other ideas of manliness than those of a half-fledged naval officer who could converse in Latin.

In London Geordie brooded over Bobby, and he had time enough, for to keep out of Mammy's way on his excursions to the city, which often lasted whole weeks toward the end of his undergraduate days, he kept close to the house.

It was a help to him that now, when he had really experienced love, he no longer thought of it merely as a passion. He learned from all manner of fugitive experiences that it has its gradations, and hence he gained opportunities for comparison.

As a matter of fact, he was no longer in love with Bobby, which was natural. Yet, if he had not seen her for three days, he grew restless. He came to feel that she was a part of his blood and bone. Now and again he had the impression that she had been supplanted, for compared with the passions which inspired him in London, she lost considerably. But strangely enough, she always bobbed up serenely on the top again, to trouble his thoughts.

It was not her voice, or anything, as with little Miss Parker, which had to do with her figure or appearance, that fascinated him and would not let him rest, even when the farm on which she lived seemed farther away from him than the Dog-star. It was something different, which he could neither control nor fight against. "Perhaps," he thought sometimes, "because she looks like me." Could it be that?

That summer when Geordie was with Mammy in Brighton, he sent for Bobby as soon as his mother returned to London for a few days. She traveled day and night, curled up like a cat in her corner, in order to see him. Geordie lived in a rather out of the way villa. Bobby arrived at night, was seen only in her riding habit, and Geordie took care that she passed for a boy, which was not difficult since she never met anybody. But it was unfortunate that Hobhouse was not there, for his hand alone could have smoothed out all difficulties.

One afternoon, on the beach, when both were returning, drenched through, from sailing, they encountered Lady Bless, who had just arrived. Geordie had to introduce them, and did it in a rather odd way.

"That's a bit of news," said Lady Bless dryly, "—that your mother has two sons."

"My father," replied Geordie tranquilly, "was, as Lady Bless may remember, twice married."

With inimitable formality, Lady Bless turned her lorgnet on the brothers.

"I cannot believe," she said, taking no notice of Geordie, "that Captain John had a son of whom I know nothing. But even if such were the case, it is impossible that his son should look like that."

She snapped her lorgnet, and turned to the Pup.

But she had not quite completed this movement before Bobby once more drew her undivided attention to herself.

"If you don't believe that I'm a boy," she said in her unadulterated dialect, "you can come and see for yourself."

Two days later Mammy came "to look for her sons." She found neither, but in her excitement she was artless enough to tell the story to everybody.

"Dear old Baron," said Hobhouse, when he learned of the affair, "you must realize by now that this sort of foolishness will cost you too dear in the long run. Another challenge like that and not even a cat will receive you."

"That wouldn't be any loss," said Geordie, irritated.

"Of course, it wouldn't," said Hobhouse quietly, "but if you don't want to know people, stay away from them, instead of letting yourself be thrown out by them."

Geordie appeared to have taken those words to heart, for he never spoke about the girl again, and when he returned to Cambridge, the maiden remained unseen. As nobody asked Geordie about her, he did not need to own that he himself did not know where she was. Her mother had even less idea. There was nothing to be done. Bobby was the type who, when she disappeared, would not have said much about it.

When Geordie undressed, he sometimes noticed the scar made in his lower shoulder by a charming set of sharp teeth—and it made him feel quite miserable.

Folkestone began to pack as he had to go on board a warship in a fortnight. The first farewell dinner

was held in the college, it was Spartan and vegetarian, a real training diet—but on the sideboard were displayed the prizes that the team had won.

"There are all kinds," said Long, when he saw the whole collection.

Geordie's diving, pistol-shooting and knack for jumping even heavy horses over hurdles had raised their score considerably. In contrast to the customary light athletics, these categories were rarely represented at Cambridge.

"Seventeen, eighteen . . ." counted Hobhouse, who was also astonished.

Folkestone, gazing abstractedly over the table said, "It's probably a record."

In his handsome Hermes head a plan had hatched at that moment that gave him no more rest. He was the first to part from the team and felt the most keenly the dissolution of their group. There must, he felt, be something more than silver loving-cups as a memorial of the team.

But it was at the second farewell dinner, which was held in Hobhouse's rooms, and was a very different affair from the other, that he first mentioned it. He had thought it all over in the meantime, and put it to the disconcerted team, rather like Odysseus persuading his friends to use the wooden horse.

"You can believe me, that I'm damned sorry to go away from here," he said, as they rose from the table. "By Saturday the team will be as good as broken up. How do you suppose we can keep it together, anyhow? I've thought it over for a long time: we must publish something."

The rest of the team gazed at him with rather imbecile expressions.

"We must," Folkestone continued, without heed-

ing the general lack of comprehension, "we simply must publish the results of the boat races and so on."

The idea was so new that it acted like a bomb on the youths.

Hobhouse turned to Geordie. "Of course. We'll publish the triumph sonnets."

"Funny, that nobody thought of the idea before," said Geordie.

The results of all competitions had always to be ceremoniously announced to the assembled college, and it had been the custom for decades to make the announcements in sonnet form.

"Splendid!" said Long enthusiastically. "Oxford will go green with envy." It had taken him some time to understand what it was all about, but then he at once hit on the most important point.

For decades the Cambridge teams had laughed at the Oxford highbrows who, at their solemn conclaves, merely declaimed sonnets in praise of the State or valor or old England's naval victories. The Cambridgians had pointed out that the Olympic youth never perpetrated such nonsense, but, like the students of Cambridge, had ordered triumphal sonnets to be made about their sporting records, which, as in Pindar's case, had served for all eternity.

As Long was out of the question, and Folkestone's precise political mind had not sufficient verve, it was left to Geordie and Hobhouse to compose the sonnets in praise of Long's headers and Folkestone's four hundred yard dashes.

Folkestone's thesis was as follows: it assumed that the sonnets of his team were better than any others in Cambridge. That was not disputed, since there was no competition being held in the field. Besides,

there was nobody in Cambridge who would have contested Folkestone's opinion.

The second premise in Folkestone's thesis, and to this the people at Oxford must also agree, was that for men who had distinguished themselves at rowing and trap-shooting, there was a double glory in turning out acceptable triumph sonnets. On the other hand, and this remained a peculiarly Cambridge opinion, it was a disgrace to write poems about valor and not be able to row.

The more they thought about it, the more convinced they became that this was also a matter of team-work. It never even occurred to them that the triumphal sonnets were the work of Hobhouse and the Pup. Long said "our sonnets," and Folkestone said the same, though he was cleverer than Long. Even the Pup said "our."

But Hobhouse, after brooding over his sonnets for several nights, withdrew them. There were long debates about that, until finally the Pup induced Hobhouse, who was rather extravagantly modest, to add at least two or three of his.

Finally, Geordie himself added the farewell sonnet to Folkestone, and one or two other things. It was not such a bad little volume, but before the preparations were finished, Folkestone had long been cruising on the lee side of a man-of-war, down the Channel.

"I hope," he had said from his coach, "that our last team work will bring us credit."

Long would not have felt anything strange in having his name on the title page, and apparently neither did Folkestone. Their community had been so close, and they were such cracks in their own

lines, that they expected such give and take. But when the question became acute, Folkestone could no longer be reached, and Hobhouse emphatically declined to appear on the title page. So there remained nothing to do, in view of Hobhouse's delicate feelings, but to launch the opus under the Pup's name alone.

That was the only possibility of giving a start to what was intended as the team's blow at Oxford, and, indeed, the Pup was less delicate than Hobhouse, and though several of the sonnets were not his, signed the title page with his own rather long name. Nevertheless, all the arrangements were made by the team in common, and on the basis of some remarkable calculation, Long had to pay most towards the printing.

It all happened rather quickly. The team had a hundred copies printed in Southwall, and each sent some to his acquaintances. The Pup received several kind post-cards and letters in return, as though he had sent a present of a rabbit pie. Literature was a craft with which everyone at the two universities busied himself, and whose technique the young men practiced, just as they practiced the technique of riding or of keeping a conversation on a certain plane.

The team, in its passion for records, had cast its eyes on Oxford only, and had not thought of the effect that must follow when the rest of public opinion became interested in a little book, containing some pretty, dilletantish, triumphal sonnets, with the name of a Peer of England on the title page. The Oxonians, with exceeding joy, flung the team's slender volume into all those corners where reviews

sprout from the soil,—and, with exceeding joy, awaited the results.

But the team was only flattered by the utterances which reached them privately, or were launched in the periodicals by a number of illustrious persons who were close to Cambridge.

One day, however, Long appeared in the team room with a face like that of the renowned bloodhound, who bears in the wrinkles of his head, the sorrows of the United Kingdoms. Long had received a knockout.

He held the blow comically in his hand. It was the brush-proofs of a periodical, which was to appear a month later, proofs which the Oxonians, with small credit, had smuggled into Cambridge, to attest the unsporting fact that they were, to say the least, behind the business. The article was one long vituperation, and Long was so furious that he did not remark that the insult was directed only against the Pup, and not against the team, of whose existence the author of the diatribe did not mention a word.

The author of the lampoon, which Hobhouse took from Long's hands with the tips of his fingers, had other points that interested him, and, as the editor of a political paper, did not give a damn for the customs of Cambridge or its rivalry with Oxford, indeed, he did not give a damn for the quality of the verse,—he was concerned wholly and solely with its author and with the House of Lords. He was writing a satire on the nobility, though really it had not been the team's intention to offer up the Pup's head for political purposes.

Yet he offered it up bravely. Not a muscle of

Geordie's pale face twitched as Hobhouse read out the massive sentences. The very first lines showed the writer's intentions. "The young Lord's verse," he wrote with that guileless ambiguity that distinguishes so many critics, "is of the sort of which it can be said that neither God nor man created this." The whole article was everywhere permeated with that malicious spirit which people like to display when they have nothing to lose, or occasionally when they are humpbacked.

The Pup had the pleasure of being frequently referred to as "the noble minor."

Both the others stared at Geordie. Long's glance was rather furtive. His expression had that in it which a righteous eye assumes when it sees a respectable man annihilated. Hobhouse's eyes were darkened by a peculiar seriousness. He was astonished that their tiny, private edition could evoke so much hate.

"Geordie," he said, smiling as he was accustomed to smile during a particularly close competition, "it's a tremendous success."

Long looked at him as though he had taken leave of his senses. Then he hid the Pup's ears under the palms of his tremendous hands, and looked straight into Geordie's eyes.

"We'll avenge ourselves, dear old Baron," he said, and went out. Only then did Geordie notice that Long felt more insulted than he did himself.

For a while they feared that a number of suspected jaws at Oxford might be bashed in. But this fear, and their own thirst for vengeance, were quenched by a more drastic intervention. A few days after their reading of the attack, Fletcher entered the clubroom without knocking, remained

standing, deathly pale, and tried to speak but failed. After his horrified glance had rested on them both, he suddenly let his braced shoulders slump. He could not go on and left the room.

Hobhouse nodded to Geordie and followed the servant. A moment later he returned, his face gray.

"Ah, Geordie," he said, "please don't be frightened. But Long is dead."

Geordie stared at the floor: Long, the kind, the strong youth was no longer alive.

"What has happened?" he said tonelessly.

"He dived in a shallow place."

Everything turned round before Geordie's eyes. He saw Long before him, ordering his leg of mutton in order to make his famous joke; saw him, when somebody scouted his story, striking himself on his barrel chest and shouting, "Then my name is Mud!" Long had struck a sharp stone with his poor skull. Geordie felt quite empty and inconsolable. He simply could not understand.

"You don't need to be ashamed," said Hobhouse softly.

But Geordie could not even weep.

Hobhouse apparently had no stock of tears either, Geordie observed; probably he was bone dry.

All Cambridge followed the coffin at the funeral. Only Geordie and Hobhouse preceded it. In their hands they carried two of the oars Long had won. They thought of Folkestone who must be cruising somewhere between Teneriffe and Tangiers. They walked rather quickly and held the oars, even though it looked rather sloppy, as they imagined the centurions of Alexander must have led the chargers that drew his funeral coach. Behind them another team carried the coffin.

To reach the cemetery they had to go along the river bank and into the country. On a hillock by the churchyard, Murray and Fletcher, who were not permitted to follow the coffin, were waiting with the Newfoundland dogs, who tugged at their chains.

The cortege wound into sight, like a serpent, along the river bank, and drew nearer.

Long ago, when the old madman from Newstead Abbey had shot his coachman, Murray had sat on the box, and made a memorable funeral journey beside the corpse, who would not let go the reins. Now he shook his head and looked at Fletcher.

"Not even a carriage," said Fletcher, who had never yet seen a funeral ceremony without uniforms and top hats.

They shook their heads, and had to stir their legs to arrive in time, for the dogs tugged at their leashes as though they scented game.

Soon the Cambridgians turned the corner. They walked quickly. Over their left shoulders, they had hung their coats; they thrust out their chests, and held their shoulders gracefully poised. They had already marched through the gate with the coffin when the servants reached the wall.

8.

THIS IS NOT SPORTING

The Pup had a great many things to settle, for his majority was at hand. He arranged things in London while the Crow thought he was in Cambridge all the while. Glad as they both were whenever they saw one another, it was very difficult to get along with Mammy. She interfered in everything, made mountains out of molehills, and treated serious matters as childish nonsense, but even if these things were to be put up with, her fits of fury, that burst like bolts from the blue, were a continual menace to domestic harmony.

The lease of Newstead Abbey was ending, and Geordie gave Lord Grey notice that on the day it ended he would himself move in, to which the old man responded by immediately vacating, two months before the lease was out, and sending the keys to the Crow, without any reference to the notice or so much as mentioning the Pup. From this receipt, the Crow decided that Geordie must be in London, and though she did not discover the secret of his bachelor quarters, she came, by chance, on Fletcher's trail. Geordie had nothing so much on his mind as getting Newstead Abbey ready for occupation as soon as possible, for he already had some definite plans. As ill luck would have it, the law suit over the mines took a new turn, and left him just enough ready cash to furnish three guest rooms.

As Geordie was about to start for Newstead Abbey he received a letter from Hobhouse, informing

him that the small gunboat, on which Folkestone was cruising, had been rammed as it passed through the Needles in a fog, never expecting to hit a wreck.

"I beg of you, dear old Baron," he wrote, "not to fall from your horse in the near future. You might easily break your neck, and I do not want to be the sole survivor."

Folkestone, too! Geordie shuddered.

A deep longing to see Hobby seized on him. He wrote him to come and get him, and they would go down to Newstead Abbey together.

But when Hobby arrived, Geordie refused to set out. He was troubled and uncertain. Fletcher insisted that he had seen Bobby, and Hobhouse learned for the first time from Geordie that she had been missing for a long while.

Hobhouse sat down calmly in an armchair.

"Well, what do you mean to do with her?" he asked.

"We could at least talk to one another."

"In spite of the fact that she simply vanished?"

"Bobby is so funny, Hob."

"That would make me all the more ashamed to run after her."

Geordie instantly dropped his eyes. For a long minute he struggled with himself.

"Good," he said at last, "we'll go early tomorrow morning, Hobby."

"Quite right, Geordie," said Hobhouse, clapping him on the arm.

Then Hobhouse went into the garden. "Sport in its proper place," he said to himself, "but now we must talk sensibly." He sought out Fletcher whom he found with the dogs.

"Listen, Fletcher," he said, "I think it would be as

well if you were to forget completely a certain young lady whom you imagine you have seen lately."

The servant showed obvious satisfaction that Hobhouse had spoken to him as to a gentleman.

"Very good," he said. "If I may say so, I am very glad to hear that, for she uses shocking expressions."

"I did not ask you for your opinion," said Hobhouse.

"Very good, sir," answered Fletcher.

Five minutes after Hobhouse had gone back into the house, Fletcher was still standing on the same spot. "This is not sporting," he murmured at last, and slunk back into the house. He had not thought it possible that Mr. Hobhouse could speak so vulgarly to him.

Shortly afterwards, Hobhouse, sitting alone in the dimly lit hall, was roused from his chair by a violent uproar. Fletcher came flying through the door. Behind him appeared a woman whose bulk made Hobby's eyes start from their sockets. Although she did not know Hobhouse, she set upon him.

"I've discovered you at last with your secret lodgings," said the lady darkly. She paused for breath. "You've hurt your mother with this just as much as if you had put a bullet though her body."

Hobhouse rose.

"Mrs. Byron, if I am not mistaken," he said coldly but affably.

The Crow stopped as though she had actually received the shot she had so vividly mentioned.

"What? Who are you?" she cried, gasping for breath. "I wish to talk to my son and not to the people who are setting him against his mother. Go to the devil, sir. Fetch the beast," she added, turning to Fletcher, who stood, pale, behind her.

Even the old murderer, who read Virgil to him and trained rats, had never in all his life used so much brutality to him as came his way that day. He gave the Crow a look that was that of a hunted animal and nothing else.

"I'll make you toddle," said the Crow grimly.

This caused Fletcher to make a departure which, while not too precipitate or contrary to his leisurely principles, was yet somewhat hasty.

Hobhouse had already left the Crow alone on the field of battle.

While Hobby strolled about the garden, Geordie passed a by no means pleasant afternoon. He was in a very bad position. Though he himself had a thousand good reasons for maintaining lodgings of his own, there was no denying the fact that he had secretly furnished and lived in them.

After Mammy was gone, Geordie grew more and more concerned.

"Fletcher."

The servant gave the impression of having been completely shattered.

"Go to my mother's house and ask if she feels well. Don't ask her, herself, but go through the garden passage to the kitchen. Understand?" he said, feeling wretched.

He had listened to his mother's palaver about poisoning herself from his sixth year on, but today he had an uneasy conscience and felt nervous about it.

When Fletcher came back and announced that Mrs. B. was eating a hearty supper, Geordie breathed freely again. Mammy was feeling well, at all events. The outburst of fury in the afternoon had refreshed her body like a shower of rain. She al-

ways loved him most when she had nearly crushed him.

By the time she had reached her own stairs, several excuses for Geordie's wicked behavior had occurred to her She would have preferred to go back and be reconciled to him, but her corpulence did not grant her the strength. She reproached herself bitterly all evening for having treated her only son so badly.

"Be careful, Geordie, that you don't get so fat," said Hobhouse the next morning, when they were in the carriage and had already left London behind them.

Geordie looked down at his smooth muscular body. "Come now! I have English blood from my father's side."

Hobhouse pulled a skeptical face, and was so little convinced by that argument that he did not reply.

Geordie was always willing to refer to his ancestors who had fought at Hastings. All honor to William the Conqueror and his band of Vikings—he, Hob, was also descended from them. But the previous afternoon he had seen what Scotch blood looks like, and the kind of temperament that goes with it. And on the Gordon side it was even royal blood. Gaelic highland chieftains! O, well,—Hobby settled himself in his rug. He would enjoy seeing how Geordie managed matters. He should certainly not get any fatter at present.

When they arrived at Newstead Abbey, they found that the work was progressing slowly, and that it would be at least a fortnight before they could use the guest rooms. Geordie had invited a dozen people from Cambridge and Har-

row, and he had to cancel the invitations and put them off for several weeks longer.

Hobhouse noticed with astonishment what a change there was in the Pup from the moment he took possession of Newstead Abbey. At the time of Noel Long's death he had been deeply shaken for several weeks. But all the occurrences of the last few weeks, even Folkestone's death, seemed, strangely, not to have come home to him.

When for a week Hobby had seen Geordie only at meals, he went one evening, that Geordie did not appear at supper, to his study.

"Well?"

"Sit down," said Geordie. He disclosed his plan for replying to the critic of the Edinburgh Review who had called him a "noble minor."

Hobby considered the much scribbled paper, and lifted his right eyebrow. It was a Cambridge rule always to take revenge, but he was curious about this exchange of blows, with its judgments and turns of expression. So far the Pup had only had weapons of leather or wood in his hands, his new armament gave him an infernal pleasure. In his passion he even forgot to eat.

"Play the game," Hobhouse nodded, and went down to supper alone.

The pamphlet against the Edinburgh reviewer speedily broadened out. Soon, to Hobby's delight, Geordie had strung up not only the pirates, but even the beloved heroes of literature, side by side, impartially, from the trees of Newstead Abbey.

"It's really amusing," said Hobby one night, when Geordie awoke him at four in the morning with a scene he had just written, to which Hobby must positively listen then and there. "But what is still

more amusing, old Baron, is that in your writings, you are older and cleverer than you are in real life. Give me a glass of water. And perhaps in the future you will be less impudent in some of your judgments."

"I'll look to that, Hobby, but it gives me great pleasure to be frank."

"It would give me more pleasure," said Hobhouse, "if you would let me sleep over it a little longer. Good morning."

Until the guest rooms were ready, Geordie had to travel back and forth to London frequently. He always visited Mammy and sometimes stayed with her, really because, under no circumstances, could he have her with him at Newstead. He suffered for this resolve, but he went through with it, and so this turn, too, in their lives, like everything else that had bound them together, was two-sided, a mixture of love and self-preservation. At Newstead Abbey his mother would immediately have interfered in his affairs and his work, would have approved or condemned, and, in any case, upset them, and Geordie had no inclination to let her residence at Newstead Abbey be the signal for a duel in which Mammy would have strained every nerve to trample him under foot.

But so powerful were the ties that bound these two people together, that Mammy had unfortunately contracted some of those very bad habits of Geordie's against which she had stormed for years. She stayed up at night, smoked and drank mocha in such quantities that even her servants were alarmed.

For the present he consoled Mammy by telling her that her apartments at Newstead could not possibly be ready for a long time, as they were to be

better furnished than the somewhat primitive guest rooms. Now and again he invented little things, quite opposite to what he really thought, so that Mammy could excitedly oppose them, and he could give in, out of love for her,—which always made her happy.

"Listen, Geordie, it's really a scandal that you shouldn't have seen your sister for ten years. I must call on Lady Holderness one of these days, and you can come along with me," she said one day.

Geordie laughed, for he had practically forgotten his half-sister.

"Since when have you and Lady Holderness been on visiting terms, Mammy," he asked, amused.

As long as he could remember, Lady Holderness and everything connected with her had been a red rag to the Crow, and she was generally mentioned with peculiarly emphatic expressions of aversion.

Before he married the daughter of George Gordon of Gight (through whom Mammy was in direct descent from Earl Huntly, son-in-law of James I) Captain John had seduced the wife of the Earl of Carmaerthen, whose mother was Lady Holderness. The old lady had started terrifying proceedings against the Captain and forced him to marry her daughter after her divorce. But she died suddenly from the birth of her daughter Augusta, and Lady Holderness brought up her grandchild until Augusta married Colonel Leigh.

Mammy had declined any intercourse with "John's brat." But Geordie had met her once or twice. When Augusta married the Colonel, Geordie had received an invitation, but he was unable to attend as he was sick at school at the time. He had made inquiries about Colonel Leigh, however, and

was much annoyed that his sister Augusta should have married a racing man who possessed nothing but an estate, debts, and a shock of red hair. That was not enough for a sister of his, even though he hardly knew her. Leigh's qualifications were not such as to impress a young man from Harrow or Cambridge. Riding, yes,—but betting! Rather rowdy!

A short time before, the Crow had met Lady Holderness by chance, and when she saw the old lady, was suddenly so touched that she promised to pay her a visit. But she only thought of carrying it out when it struck her that Lady Holderness must surely be annoyed if she saw her handsome son. For no very good reasons, she had a poor opinion of Augusta.

Geordie went in order to please Mammy.

When they reached Lady Holderness' country house, Augusta was no longer there. Leigh, of whom Geordie was already contemptuous without ever having seen him, played the Pup a trick, leaving that very morning, with Augusta, for Derby where he was to organize the races. Geordie, who would now have liked to see his sister, sent a few curses after him, which did not, however, prevent Leigh from winning a good round sum from the bookmakers that day.

The Pup had to content himself with looking at an ivory miniature of Augusta, done two years before; while the aging Lady Holderness aired her grievances against Colonel Leigh, who took her grand-daughter's money from one race track to another, daily risking the little that remained.

Geordie utilized the old lady's rage to let the miniature glide into his pocket, in which he failed

completely. At the very decided request of Lady Holderness, he set it again on the table. Consequently, on the journey home, he was extremely dissatisfied with the old lady's behavior, especially as she had treated him with the same aversion one shows to the son of a man who has brought a misfortune on the family.

The Pup had not seen his half-sister for seven years, and, as he was then eighteen, seven years was a long while. At that time he had been sent out into the very garden, where he was now standing, to look for a girl he didn't even know. Only after gazing around a long while, had he suddenly caught sight of the girl in her short white dress, sitting in a fruit tree above him.

He was so taken aback to see two long legs suddenly dangling out an apple-tree over his head, that he had exclaimed, "Ah!" in astonishment.

Since then Augusta had been called "A." It was the first letter of a name which was far too solemn for her.

The Pup gazed out of the window. He remembered every detail of that afternoon. It was the season in Scotland. The mist had evaporated as the sun filled the melancholy crystaline sky overhead. The birds and the grasshoppers had begun to sing. The grown-ups were amusing themselves in uncertain ways on the terrace. Now and again in the stillness an apple fell with a thud on the grass. From far away across the golden borders of the park came the sound of scythes and harvest wagons, while that peculiar scent rose from the earth, which was about to reach the high point of its fruitfulness, the scent that from that day forth always brought back to him, in early autumn, the vision of the fruit trees on Lady

Holderness' estate, and the reek of the earth, that strong, spicy scent of the burnt-out summer, which has a trace of melancholy in it, because it knows it is passing.

On that day the Pup had pulled himself together and begun to climb up into the tree at whose top his sister sat. But Augusta, her glance fixed on the glossy grass, had said leisurely, "Little boy, if you think you're going to climb up this tree, I'll give you something on your nose that you won't like."

And, swinging in a warlike way, up and down on her branch, like a grandson of Tintoretto's, she aimed an apple of such hugeness at his upturned face, that, with a shrug of the shoulders, the Pup withdrew. He could not very well tear down the branch on which a lady, and that lady his sister, was sitting. But Augusta had not forgotten that indifferent shrug of the shoulders.

Shortly after the visit to Lady Holderness, Geordie finally settled at Newstead Abbey, and opened up the guest rooms which, reflecting his law suits, were of an unpretentiousness that only a youth from a great English family could have accepted tranquilly as unimportant. The guests' wing was soon full of young people who slept till noon and spent the rest of the day shooting through the hedges at the farmer's horses, with peashooters.

The Pup had a strange predilection for solitude, but he could not bear to be alone. Hence he liked to gather a horde round him, who lived according to their own tastes, but who conformed to all his wishes; who were there when he wanted them, but who did not disturb him in any way when he wanted to work. These youths had all much the same conception of life, and though they were

housed like Maccabees, were perfectly charming persons. Their own guest cells, which were really nothing more than painted ruins, they tidied up themselves, wherefore the servants prized them not a little.

Meanwhile Mammy awaited the completion of her apartments, which Geordie always deferred. Their correspondence on this subject was not inspiring. When Mammy learned that a company of rowdies was lodged at Newstead Abbey, she wrote a wild letter to the Pup comparing him to Rousseau.

Hobhouse spent a whole evening discussing with Clare who could have supplied her with the comparison. Geordie, on his side, made this literary lapse a pretense for being affronted. In that agreeable position he remained for a month, in the meantime belaboring the heads of his famous contemporaries. At last Mammy apologized, a humility behind which the Newstead people scented a cunning strategem. But this dropping to her knees was only another of Mammy's customary soul crises. On the same day she wrote a denunciatory letter, in which she informed him minutely of details she had been told about his friends from Harrow and Cambridge who were "camped out in naked ruins without a roof over their heads." It was a bit exaggerated.

"I hear," she wrote, with a final brandish of her club, "that even Fletcher never gets up till ten o'clock. It is really high time you treated that shameless creature more severely."

This letter passed through Hobhouse's hands and he read it to Fletcher one day when the man's dignity got on his nerves again. Fletcher bore that

sentence, like so many other bitter things in life, without blenching. But the next morning he woke Hobhouse at seven. Hobby, however, was not the sort of man to whom that happened a second time.

9.

THE CARRIAGE

One evening a carriage rolled across the fields towards Newstead Abbey, but as a result of many unforeseen circumstances, the occupants caught their first glimpse of the trees in the park through the twilight. There was a long discussion about events, in the carriage, in the course of which one person gave vent to his feelings in strong language.

It was completely dark as they tried to drive up to the ruins. At last the man, who was himself driving, pulled up.

"It's no use," he said angrily, "we can only get into this quarry on foot."

The lady jumped out of the carriage, took the lamp from the mudguard and went ahead. It was not difficult to find their way. Soon they were approaching the building. The corridor, between the Abbey and the main buildings, was, as they saw, illuminated. They followed a terrific uproar, and came to the lighted windows. They pressed their faces against the glass. In the hall they saw a dozen coatless young men, shooting with pistols at a bottle of Burgundy which was swaying to and fro on a wire.

"I don't suppose," said the man outside, "that those half naked creatures in there are exactly bored."

"Geordie's bear must be somewhere around here," said the lady, as she entered the doorway into a long passage.

She was mistaken, though the next moment a creature on a rattling chain rushed at her.

"Damn it," cried the man, giving the animal a kick.

"I've made a mistake in their sequence," said the lady, who had eluded the danger by flattening herself against the wall, "that was only a wolf."

They encountered the bear shortly afterwards, as they climbed over a column, lying directly across the passage. He reared up, growling, but the lady let him have one on the head. Then she pushed open the door behind which the shooting was going on. But nobody appeared to want to pay any attention to the young lady's entrance, which she took in obviously bad part.

A moment later the whole herd turned round.

Behind them, in the full flood of the light, stood a girl with a voice that rang out like a trumpet.

"Geordie," cried the young lady, "we wanted to surprise you. The devil! Which one are you?"

Her arm extended rigidly, she moved the carriage lamp around the circle, as carelessly as if she were waving a pennant at a race.

"Is it you?" said the young lady, peering skeptically at a face in which only the eyes were recognizable, the rest of the face being rather black from the shooting.

Geordie stared without presentiments at an oval girlish face, rather broad about the chin, which gave it a peculiar expression of impudence and indifference. But this face was afire under its skin. The girl's figure had neither hips nor curves. Her snug-fitting traveling dress gave it long, soft lines. Geordie saw a skeptical expression pass over her face. He blinked, and observed how the light that came

through the doorway, seemed to enclose her lithe, sinewy figure as in soft armor.

"Augusta," said the Pup hesitatingly.

"A!" he cried, suddenly sure, "A!—A!"

All at once, as if he had gone crazy, he rushed towards her to kiss her throat and hands. For an instant it looked as if he might knock her down.

"I have brought Colonel Leigh with me," said Augusta, without for one instant forgetting her childhood superiority, and she nodded in the direction of the red-headed officer. "He is, on the whole, very congenial, and would like to know what you are doing here."

The Pup introduced to Colonel Leigh and his sister, whom he had not seen since she was twelve years old, the assembled youths, whom Harrow and Cambridge had issued and whom he had honored with his friendship.

"Ah, Colonel Leigh," said Geordie, eyeing the Colonel's sporting attire, "we heard this noon that an old schoolfellow of ours, Hag, on whose behalf we once hauled down the school flag, has been convicted in some infamous business. Well and good, —we are shooting a little, to his memory. Just think," he continued, gazing at Augusta, "Boatswain died this morning. Won't you and Colonel Leigh drink a drop to his health?"

Augusta accepted a vessel from the Duke of Dorset's hands, and sipped at it, though she had no idea that Boatswain was a Newfoundland dog. The Colonel studied his container before drinking from it. It was a silver mounted skull, which on that very spot, where wine was now being sipped from it, had once sung pious Latin masses in the abbey, in

the days when Henry IV bestowed these lands on Lord John.

"Your house is delightfully furnished," said Augusta with a glance at the skull. Don't you want to wash up a bit?"

When Geordie returned from his ablutions, Augusta beheld a young man, as radiant as a war god, but who looked decidedly dissipated, and was lame into the bargain. But at that moment they both gazed at one another as if they saw only each other's eyes.

"Really we're simply on our usual trip to Six Mile Bottom," said the Colonel in his nutcracker voice, and put the skull down on a chair. "We only meant to drive over for an hour. But those damned field paths are bottomless, and we finally even had to build a temporary bridge. So, for good or evil, we shall have to spend the night under your roof."

"You can thank Lord Clare for the broken bridge," said Geordie, laughing. "Every day he destroys all the approaches to Newstead Abbey, because we haven't a single spare bed in the house. A, you will sleep in my bed."

He made a slight bow and looked at Augusta, like the shipwrecked King Rother, offering his narrow ledge of rock to a woman before casting himself back into the waves.

"Thanks," said A, "but first we are hungry. I promised Leigh on the way over, when he wanted to turn back, that he should partake of your favorite dish."

"Then I'm afraid he'll have to eat bacon and eggs," said the Pup.

"That's really a splendid suggestion," said the Colonel courteously.

"Let's go across at once," said Geordie, turning to A.

Only when the meal was set before them, did it strike Geordie that bacon and eggs had never agreed with him.

A applied herself to carving Geordie's tough ham, while she carefully studied the heads round the table.

"What are we going to do tomorrow?" she asked, after she had sufficiently pondered what one possibly could do with such a crew.

"I come of age tomorrow," said Geordie looking at his plate.

"Oh, you are going to have a birthday? Then the people in the village will get a roast ox, as they always do," said A. She seemed to be quite delighted at the medieval custom.

"H'm," replied Geordie.

Augusta laid down her knife. "What, aren't you going to give them an ox?" she asked slowly. She had gray, impenetrable but very flashing eyes, and one could never be sure if she was amused or not.

"It's quite simple," replied Geordie, after a slight hesitation, while he blushed to the roots of his hair. "We have no oxen at Newstead, and thanks to our damned law suits, there are not at this moment six shillings in the house."

"Nonsense, Geordie," said A, gazing steadily at him, "we can lend you a couple of pounds the first thing in the morning,—can't we, Leigh?"

Although the whole crowd laughed at the tone of her voice, she acted as if she had just entrusted Geordie with some great and beautiful secret.

10.

THE JOURNEY

NINE months later, Geordie and Hobhouse arrived in Lisbon one Sunday afternoon. On the way from the harbor to their hotel, baskets of oranges and flowers were offered them,—both growing on the same branch. Eight days later they rode down past the fortress of Cintra to the quay. Hobby fetched his fishing tackle from the heavy luggage on the yacht. He threw the straps, which held the tackle, over his shoulder, and they rode back. From above, they could see the yacht already on its way past Cape St. Vincent to Gibraltar.

Next morning they set out by Merida, Zafra, Gala to Andalusia. About midday they reached the Guadilquiver, whose waters ran red. On its banks stood flocks, cows, goats, sheep and donkeys. It was just as noisy by day as by night, but the air had a deep charm. It made one feel light and listless. As far as they could see, the plains were blue, but rather bleak and greenish, and not to be compared with the color of the sky.

Towards evening they arrived in Seville. The garden of the Alcazar was so red with fallen oranges that the paths seemed paved with gold. Flocks of birds flew round the Giralda when the great bell swung on its beam. There was always music. Three days later they went on to Cadiz. They had to travel over a long dune till they beheld the town lying high up on a silver cliff, in the midst of the blue southern sea. Palms grew on the ramparts.

As long as they remained there, Hobby fished from the Alameda into the ocean. For it he needed a rod twenty yards long, and fifty yards of line. His family had long been among the greatest fishing fiends in Scotland.

They followed the Spanish riviera to Gibraltar, and from there they sent Murray back home with most of the luggage.

"Now Mammy will have somebody whom she can question for the next half year about what we have had to eat," said Geordie as they went out to the boat, to see about their things.

Shortly afterwards they themselves embarked, sailed through the Mediterranean, down the Italian coast, passed around Sicily, towards the East. During the voyage Hobhouse busied himself with navigation. He calculated the ship's position by the compass, and his calculations were generally correct, except in case of deviations of the compass, of which he understood nothing.

Geordie had brought two green notebooks with him from London, intending, on the way, to write something similar to the pamphlet he had finished at Newstead Abbey, which had appeared some three months before his departure, causing a small sensation. But not very much occurred to him. So he used the books to make occasional notes about his travels.

Just before they reached the Greek coast, Geordie went up on deck early, and immediately called to Hobhouse, who was still in his cabin.

"Look, Hobby, what is that?"

"Cythera, I think."

"Do put away your idiotic chart," said Geordie, "I mean the water."

The sea around them smelled not of plants, but of that sweet sea breeze which is even sweeter than the scent of flowers. It rippled along the side of the ship like fluid silk, and was as blue as if sky and water had changed places. For the rest of the journey, the rushing of the cloven water was accompanied by a wild, yet delicate, scent.

A few hours later they saw the olive woods which come down to the sea from the heights of Corfu, and next day the crystal white mountains of Albania hung above them in the air. Soon after they were in Athens where they spent the winter.

Attica was a sandy plain with wonderful light effects.

Geordie rode once with Hobby right across the Peloponnesus and visited Sparta, where a couple of pigs were wallowing in front of three huts, and Olympia, whose stadium lay buried beneath the mud of a river which had changed its course.

The historic battlefields interested him much more. He went sailing himself from the Pireus over to Salamis, and made several trips to Marathon.

From the small, grass-covered sandhill, which had been thrown up over the fallen, he reconstructed the Persian front, and the two small wings of Themistocles. Then he went over to the little olive wood, behind which the last Asiatics had long ago disappeared.

"Ah, yes," he said, as he gazed across the vineyards to the sea. It was a very pretty place and everything was really very small.

As they returned to the carriage, Fletcher stopped and looked at a well that was made from a sarcophagus and a pair of columns.

"That would make a fireplace for Newstead Abbey," said Fletcher, with sincere regret in his voice.

He noted at once, with pain, that he must never in his life speak to his master on that subject again. On many points Geordie was very fanatic.

"Everything in the right place," said Hobhouse, as Fletcher withdrew, his head hanging, "the Parthenon frieze is in better hands in England than here, where people would use it for a pigstye."

Hobhouse spoke with the assurance of an Englishman who has the Crusades, the Tower of London and the Cambridge Gothic constantly before his eyes, as the outstanding features of his country.

"In spite of that, one cannot simply take away a nation's monuments," said Geordie quietly. "If the feeling for art has degenerated among these people in their slavery, that is no reason for us to rob them."

They got into the carriage. Hobhouse thought Geordie's attitude a little childish. What the boy said was just. Oh well, even at Harrow, Geordie, as Clare had told him, had had rather exaggerated notions of justice. Hobhouse was a gentleman, really, but there were, after all, certain obvious limits. He thought of Geordie's friendship with Hag—and that those experiments of the Pup's were always accepted in rather bad part. He squinted his right eye. He looked through the columns of the temple of Poseidon at Cape Sunion, down to the sea. Enchanting!

"Pretty, Hob, isn't it?" said Geordie.

In the early spring they sailed on an English ship to Smyrna. The journey was exciting; they could see land everywhere. The sea had a smooth, azure surface and was strewn thickly with islands, standing out like puffs of cloud on the horizon. They

sailed past Euboea, Tenos, Samos, Chios, Patmos. The entry into Smyrna harbor lasted a half day.

A few days later Geordie swam across the Dardanelles. The ancient Hellespont, like the Bosphorus, is a sunken river valley, and compared with an American river, a mere brook. Nevertheless, since Leander crossed it for Hero's sake, no one had swum the strait, at least no one who knew mythology enough to commemorate his deed.

Geordie had twice tried, but had not succeeded because he had come up against the currents. The distance, two and an eighth miles, would have been a mere trifle for the team, if there had not been five distinct currents. The third time he got across, but he had gone into the water too suddenly and caught a thorough chill.

A month later they were in Constantinople.

"Do you really think, Hobby, that St. Sofia is the most sublime building in the world?" asked Geordie one day.

"I think," replied Hobhouse, "that that assertion is a stupid exaggeration."

"Certainly," said Geordie, "St. Paul's is much more imposing."

They were just crossing the Golden Horn.

When Geordie had left England, a year and a half before, he would willingly have traded St. James, Westminster and St. Paul's for the first Turkish barracks he came to. Now, in Stamboul, he defended St. Paul's, and the English buildings of its class, against the most beautiful mosque in the world. He did not do it because it was an English church, but because he knew exactly why he thought St. Paul's more beautiful.

Suddenly he turned round. They were just entering the Bosphorus at Galata.

Two days later they came down the Bosphorus again, towards evening. It was Hobby's farewell trip. The next day he was to return to the good old Island, while Geordie remained behind.

The six minarets of the Blue Mosque shone like the horns of some graceful animal. In front of the Serail gardens the yacht put about. Beyond, like reddish-brown sails in the twilight, lay the Princes Islands. The sky glowed a molten gold. A quarter of an hour later the tiny galleries of the minarets of Hagia Sofia, of the Mosque of Suliman, of the Green Mosque, and Mosque of Bajazed, above, burned like circlets of fire.

"The devil, Geordie, have we actually grown two years older?" asked Hobby.

"Yes, I imagine so," said Geordie dryly.

They laughed and looked one another in the eye, but they felt they were appraising and testing one another.

II.

THE DIARY

In the winter Geordie sent Fletcher back to England. He himself stayed in Athens until spring, and traveled once again through the Peloponnesus. From there he went to Malta, to wait for a ship going to England.

On the voyage home, he felt a desire to work. The notebooks, which he took out with a smile, were filled with his travel diary—but there was plenty of paper on board. It amused him to see how much keener his observation had become. His satire was now much better able to distinguish between the ideas and the life of his time. By the time he reached London, he had a spirited and amusing chronicle in his trunk.

He found his affairs and law suits in a disastrous muddle. It was clear the dispute over the mines, which old Byron had disposed of, must be decided in his favor, but the object itself was so valuable that the law suit was eating up enormous sums. And the question of damages sustained by him during the illegal working of the mines remained unsolved.

His solicitor, apprized of his arrival, had got out a resumé, and begged him, in view of an action, then being tried, and which looked as though it might help him out of his embarrassments, to remain a few days longer in London. Geordie had already so overloaded Newstead Abbey with indebtedness, that the affair had to be settled once and for all.

Meanwhile, from day to day he gently put off

Mammy, who had caught too bad a cold to travel up to London, and who wrote angry letters because she could not imagine reasons important enough to prevent Geordie from coming to see her at once, after an absence of two years. Under no circumstances did Geordie wish to worry her with financial troubles.

His great amusement in those days was elaborating the pamphlet he had written on the ship. He gave it to Clare to read as soon as his friend came to see him, and Clare had given it, at Geordie's request to the publisher Murray.

A week after Geordie's arrival Hobhouse also came to London. In their conversation some question arose about an incident at a picnic on the Bay of Eleusis.

"I can decide that at once," said Geordie and rose to look it up in his travel diary. Hobby was dumbfounded to hear that Geordie had kept a diary.

"While you were fishing, Hob," said Geordie, gleefully.

He read the passage aloud. Clare asked if he might take the manuscript home and read it. The same evening he showed it to Murray, with whom he was dining. Murray took it from Clare and carried it off home with him. It came on him like a clap of thunder. Early next morning he hurried round to Clare, and rushed into his bedroom.

"No matter what happens, you must get this manuscript for me, Clare," he said, pale with excitement.

"Let me read it first," said Clare and went, annoyed, to his bath.

"I'll wait here until you've read it," said Murray

imperturbably, when Clare came back and sat down to his breakfast.

Clare calmly ate his eggs, then, with a resigned look at the ceiling, went into his study, stretched out his legs and read for over an hour.

Two hours later he was hunting Geordie all over London. He had not come home to lunch. He had just left his lawyer. Back at home, he heard that Geordie had gone to another conference, and when he drove round to his lodgings, Fletcher told him that Geordie intended to spend the evening with his lawyer.

It was very late before he finally got hold of him. As he entered Geordie's lodgings, Hobby and the Pup were sitting at the fire.

"Geordie," he said, after he had sat down and helped himself to whisky, "I've been looking all day for you. Murray wants to publish your diary. He thinks it's wonderful."

Clare looked anxiously at Geordie. Geordie went red, was bewildered for a moment, and then obviously offended. He imagined that Murray did not think very highly of his pamphlet and was trying to get rid of it that way. It was difficult for Clare to talk him out of the idea, for Geordie wanted to withdraw it at once. But as soon as Clare began to talk of the diary, Geordie grew speechless with anger.

Clare watched him from one side. He had as little doubt as did Murray that the travel diary, which Geordie had written in delightful stanzas, with his romantic pose side by side with his amusing irony, was something which, for facility and intellectual brilliance, had no equal in literature. The little book contained all that Geordie's inner

eye discerned, together with all his lost-soul attitude, —and not very much of his slang.

Geordie sat there resisting, as though against an opponent, Clare's recognition that the book was ten times more original than the pamphlet, which was only a rehash of his first work.

"But can't you understand, Clare," said Geordie, irritated, "that this is only a slovenly affair. Quite private."

"Well," said Clare, "and what of that?"

"Man, ambassador," said Geordie, more and more astonished, "they are only my travel sketches, not literature."

"Thank God, Geordie."

"Then we agree."

"Not at all. You have absolutely no idea of the value of the things you write. Give me another whisky."

They let the subject drop for that evening. Clare sat diagonally opposite Geordie, and could see him clearly outlined against the shadows of the room, while the light from the fireplace shone on him from the front and from the side. It was a classic frame for Geordie's face, with its dark hair brushed straight back. Yet the forehead bulged out so powerfully from the temples that when Clare imagined what the head would be like in twenty years, he immediately thought of the bald head of Caesar. The lower features were rather fine; the teeth firm. The eyes, though they were gray, had the transparency of blue Scandinavian eyes. But they were too close together. His chin was firm, and like his lips, had an uncommonly hard effect. "Still, it is an English head," thought Clare, smiling. He recalled Geordie's refusal of the diary.

It took their combined efforts for a week to persuade Geordie to give the diary to Murray.

When the book appeared, under the title, "Childe Harold," it was an unparalleled success. In a few days Murray sold twenty thousand copies. Geordie reluctantly agreed that pure satire was not perhaps his greatest gift.

One day Hobhouse read a review to him, and made him guess who had written it. As the writer had compared him to Shakespeare, Geordie simply shrugged his shoulders. No man believes his fame is real in the beginning. And Geordie was not only modest, he could not even comprehend his fame.

"Hold tight," said Hobhouse, "it is from the Edinburgh Review."

"That shows you the book is worth nothing," said Geordie briskly.

"Oho! they're coming round, in order not to make themselves ridiculous, noble minor." Hobhouse always quoted very graciously.

"It's a pity," said Geordie, downcast, "it was on account of those fellows that I began to write."

A month later nobody would have laughed at the comparison with Shakespeare. Geordie felt, with some uneasiness, that he had become quite another person for the public. His fame flourished so thick about him, that it got him out of a way of speaking which could be understood only at Cambridge. It happened whether he wanted it or not. And he really did not want it.

Only when, shortly afterwards, the Austrian minister, Metternich, quoted a long passage from "Childe Harold" at a cabinet meeting, did Geordie realize what was happening to him. It made him rather wistful.

One part of his life was over; he noticed it in everything. Harrow—Cambridge—the pranks at Newstead Abbey and a thousand others. He knew, of course, that it was of no importance. But he liked it.

Part II

THE PASSIONATE REBEL

I.

YOU COME AT AN UNHAPPY MOMENT

Long before all this happened Geordie was back at Newstead Abbey.

Three weeks had elapsed since he set foot on land. The affairs which kept him in London had, in fact, become so pressing that he was not able to leave the city for even half a day.

During the winter, when he had been so deep in financial worries that he could not see any other way out, he had advised his lawyer to sell Newstead Abbey. Accordingly, in February, the lawyer sold an option on the estate to a man who was to pay the first installment in May.

The purchaser belonged to the class of wealthy war profiteers,—sordid moneymakers in business, but born spendthrifts when they want to make their way in society. He had received the contract he wanted, calling for easy payments, but with the proviso that he pay a large sum for its breach, in case he backed out.

With a bitter heart, Geordie had written from Athens agreeing to this contract, which had been closed, however, before he even heard of it. How should he inform the Crow of the change? He felt real pain as he saw Newstead Abbey fading from among his youthful memories.

But when he reached London, he learned that the purchaser had suffered such losses in shipping that he could not meet even the first installment. Geordie now had to remain at his post to prevent

any of his debtor's money leaving the country before £20,000 had been placed to his credit at the bank. This was a stroke of business that gave him financial relief, without costing him a foot of ground, and the moment it was all in order, Geordie set off for Newstead Abbey to tell Mammy about his wonderful transaction.

He rejoiced as the countryside grew more familiar the nearer he got to his estate. First came the trellises with peaches on them; then he traveled through green corn; then to the right and left of his carriage the white-washed apple orchards stretched away as he reached the turn-pike from which the buildings were plainly visible.

As he drove into the courtyard, Fletcher came to the door but immediately retreated again. Surprised, Geordie followed him into the hall.

"You come at an unhappy moment," said Fletcher. In the dim hall his face looked quite crumpled up. Geordie felt a blow at his heart.

"What is it?"

"Yes, she died suddenly," said Fletcher, helping Geordie out of his cloak. "I should not have believed she could die so quickly."

Geordie noticed the smell of wax candles which were burning somewhere in the background. He blanched and followed the servant. Fletcher went slowly into the great dining hall in which Mammy was lying. She had stretched herself out enormously in the huge bed; her big, strong figure was not concealed by the linen sheet. It was plain that someone had tried in vain to cross her arms over her breast, but she had spread out her elbows stubbornly and clenched her hands.

As Geordie lifted the cloth from her face he saw

that her expression was peaceful. Geordie was well content with that expression; it even made him happy. He remained, for a moment or two, by the bed, with the cloth in his hand. Under her cheek bones and her nose, the cheeks had fallen in slightly and looked austere. He laid the cloth over her face again. For a moment he felt that that face was leaving him all alone in the world. His lips twitched.

"When did it happen?" he asked, turning to Fletcher.

"Yesterday evening at dinner," said the servant, "Murray brought her the cooper's bill for three new casks for the vineyard. It so enraged Mrs. Byron that she stood up, and then suddenly collapsed."

She had lain all night with her eyes wide open and her consciousness wide awake, and had herself asked that she be taken into the dining room because it was lighter there.

A book lay on the coverlet. Geordie picked it up and went down into the hall. It was too dark for him there, so he went out for a moment into the open air. Immediately he had to shut his eyes. The color of the summer sky above the park blinded him painfully.

He went indoors again. Through the window he looked once more into the park. Why could he suddenly not bear the light? It was such a quiet, bluish day.

The next day he heard all sorts of things about Mammy from the servants. The Crow had called them all one after another to her bedside and given orders to each. It was all a matter of trifles that passed through her mind, and to nearly everybody she had given conflicting orders. All night long her

anger against the cooper gave her no rest; even in her last moments she did not forgive him his bill.

She had asked nearly everybody about Geordie. They tried every possible way to reach him, but he had already set out.

Finally, in the morning, when she realized that the end was near, she grew very angry that Geordie was not at her bedside.

"He does not know that you are ill," said Fletcher.

"You are right, Fletcher. But it would have been the correct thing for him to be here."

"He may come at any moment," Fletcher comforted her.

"He's a good boy, but he won't manage to do that," said Mammy.

In her last moments, as in the first, she had shown Geordie a contradictory heart.

Geordie watched two nights by her body. During the second night he again came upon the book which the Crow had left lying on her death bed. She had pasted into it every review of his books she had been able to find, but around the edges she had added a commentary of her own. He noticed that wherever he had been spitefully attacked, biting comments on his enemy were pencilled on the margin. She had defended him well. Yet she could never bear to have Geordie praised. At every point where people had said something particularly nice about him, she had made drastic comments on those people.

Shortly after the funeral Hobhouse arrived. He could not be reached before.

"I say, Geordie," he remarked, after he had been in the house a short time, and taken possession of his old room, "through my window I overheard a

conversation in the yard. Why did you leave your mother's coffin at the gate, instead of following it to the graveyard? I'm afraid that for the next few months people here will talk of nothing but the queer customs in your family."

"You are perfectly right, Hobby. But as I crossed the court, I suddenly thought what it would be like if I were lying in the hearse, instead of following Mammy's coffin. It upset me more than you can imagine."

"Yes . . . of course," answered Hobhouse, going to the window and coming back again. "My deepest sympathy."

He went to the window again, and stared out at the trees. "It's queer," he thought, "how like his mother Geordie is. Nice boy, though. But in life he will often be taken for a very unpleasant fellow."

2.

PINK AND WHITE ANGEL

So far Geordie had avoided going about in London, partly from indolence, partly from disdain. Now that he was back from the Levant, he discovered in himself a great hunger for human beings, and London began to attract him at the moment when he first became curious about it.

One day he went with Clare to Lady Melbourne's box. She was a slender woman, with a dazzlingly fresh complexion and capricious dark eyes, whose lids were constantly in motion. Her whole figure was in a perpetual spiritual excitement. Only her voice was quiet and charming.

"If after a certain time, London bores you," she said, raising her lorgnette to her eyes and looking up at him, "just come to me. It is true, you will not find a lady who reads Tacitus in Latin, or plays bridge."

"Then I certainly shan't be bored," said Geordie, smiling.

"But you know I play billiards," said Lady Melbourne.

The bell rang and they left the box.

"Doesn't it strike you, too," said Geordie musingly, "that there is something of Hobby about Lady Melbourne? Her voice and so on. Too bad she isn't thirty years younger."

Clare laughed.

Geordie by now had a crowd of persons who "ad-

mired" him; everywhere he went he found people who expected him to "dominate" them.

Shortly afterwards, "The Corsair" appeared. Fifteen thousand copies were sold in one week.

But it took eight weeks for it to occur to Geordie that there was a billiard table at Lady Melbourne's. She found that he was not a very good player.

"That can be changed," he said easily. Lady Melbourne was just putting her cue into the rack. It was really too bad she had white hair. When she stretched out her arms like that she looked, with her clear complexion, like an Amazon with a lance.

"Come to dinner this evening, Geordie," she said, wiping the chalk from her fingers. "You shall sit next an interesting woman."

"Next you?"

"Nonsense! You will please not pay compliments," said Lady Melbourne, angrily.

Geordie was disappointed in his dinner partner that evening. She was one of the twenty women in Paris who at that time had a house, wit and a reputation as an authoress, but her behavior in English society was all wrong. Part of the time she thought she must surround herself with a thicket of moral judgments, part of the time she was more abandoned than became her. Though the guests at Lady Melbourne's table were not easily shocked on the score of morals, they disapproved when the Frenchwoman threw a nut across the table. All of them would have liked her to be much more depraved than was reported, but she ought not be so till after dinner.

"But when do you work?" asked Geordie, after listening for a while to an inventory of all the places she had been in the last few months.

"In my carriage," she said, laughing. "And you?"

"While I am dressing," he said, blinking. The answer pleased her so much that she hastened to jot it down on her cuff. Esprit in England? She was astonished.

When they rose from table, Lady Melbourne came down the hall to Geordie with a very tall, young woman, who looked like a polished, pink and white angel and seemed to be made of glass.

"Would you like to know my niece Caroline Lamb?" she asked.

"Didn't you speak this afternoon in the House of Lords?" said the young woman, turning to Geordie. "We were just leaving when your name was called. Was it something interesting?"

Geordie noticed that she had a pleasant voice. But there was something else about her too. He had brought back from the Orient a violent distaste for very blonde and very thin women. Caroline Lamb possessed both these qualities, but to his astonishment they did not displease him.

"It was not very interesting," he said. "I had to defend some workingmen in my constituency who destroyed a new agricultural machine. They thought they would lose their jobs through it."

"That is a remarkable idea for you to advocate," said Caroline Lamb. "I hope you will be less generous, if some day your books are burned for fear they destroy English morals."

She was charming when she was sarcastic.

Later Lady Melbourne told him that Mme. St., his dinner partner, had inquired who he was, as she had not caught his name at their introduction.

"These French are too comical," said Lady Melbourne, her eyes scanning the room for her. "When

she discovered who you were, she rubbed out a bon-mot of yours that she had jotted down on her evening dress. Too famous! Cannot be used!"

Geordie laughed absent-mindedly. She really did work "in her carriage."

"Do you think, Lady Melbourne," he asked, looking into her eyes, "that I might drive Caroline Lamb home?"

"Of course," answered Lady Melbourne.

But, whatever she may have thought, she could never have suspected that Geordie was to spend seven of the next eight days with Caroline.

Caroline Lamb was a complete surprise to Geordie. There was an intellectual atmosphere about her, and she kept a distinguished salon. She was still very young and ambitious, and possessed certain qualities which Geordie had never before met, but which attracted him strangely.

Caroline's liking for Geordie was much more a matter of ambition than womanly devotion. Essentially she considered that most men, like her husband, were blockheads—and as such they had no attraction for her. She fell in love with Geordie's fame and intelligence. It was much more exciting to her to be seen several times a day with Geordie, than to be embraced by him.

One day Geordie accompanied her to her estate in Essex. She was married to a thirty-year-old, broad-shouldered man, with a long face and blonde hair. He neither drank nor smoked, and generally sat on the terrace of his country house, looking at his horses. He hated any alteration in his habits, and not even to save his life would he have ventured upon those paths of literature which Caroline trod so surely. Every one, at one time, had been very

much astonished that he, of all people, should have married Caroline. For she was hardly more than a child then.

"Probably," Lady Melbourne had suggested, "she ravished him, because his incomparable boredom fascinated her. She must have thought she scented something behind it. She is often rather extravagant in her ideas."

"Do you think so?" said Geordie abstractedly. "I like imagination."

"So do I," said Lady Melbourne, smiling through her lorgnette, "it is only a question of where."

Geordie and Caroline reached Essex in the late afternoon, and walked side by side through the park. When they had passed up the avenue and reached the foot of the steps a tall, elegant man rose from the terrace and came down the stairs to meet them. He shook Geordie's hand and looked at him with clear eyes.

"You must forgive me for reading so little," he said, "but I never get around to it because of the animals."

With his glance he indicated the paddock where a couple of thoroughbreds were standing and staring at him. Geordie thought it quite nice of the man to say at once that he knew as much about his guest as he did about the North Pole.

"Oh, that doesn't matter at all," replied Geordie pleasantly. "Rather, it's a pity that your wife knows so little about horses."

It was a thoroughly delightful evening, during which a great deal was said about thoroughbreds. It developed that Lamb had not ridden a horse for five years. In order to judge a valuable animal, it was not necessary to ride it, in fact he believed that

by riding he would impair his breeder's eye and instinct, an opinion which Geordie had also heard from other horsemen.

Caroline remained rather silent all evening. The next day they returned to London.

Geordie had a great deal to do there. He ambled through the season, and it gave him pleasure to meet new people. Sometimes Fletcher stood ready with a change of attire as soon as he heard the carriage rolling up to the door.

At the same time the amount of work Geordie accomplished was by no means small. Things would come to him in the midst of a conversation, or when he was in full cry after a fox. It poured without effort through the chinks in his day's program. Many people, who did not rightly understand his slovenly manner, would not believe that the young man, whom one met everywhere, could write things which apparently were beyond his format.

Geordie did not refuse to know people who had but few interests. For him the life of London society was just as much an adventure as his travels in the Balkans. So that in a short time the feeling now and again came to him that he had had enough of people.

One day Caroline showed him a comic paper in which he was portrayed with Brum, the man who had decreed fashions for the last ten years. Although Caroline jealously guarded the influence of this connection, and was careful never to miss a private dinner with Brum, the juxtaposition displeased her. For in her eyes, Geordie was worth ten times as much as a dandy, even though at court, of course, a social reputation was far more influential than a literary one. Added to that, the carica-

ture showed the two men with bouquets of flowers instead of heads, spraying one another with perfume.

"Wouldn't it be better, Geordie," she said, "if you were seen about more with literary people?"

"Please stop," said Geordie, half indignant, half amused, "Only last week I breakfasted with S.M. and C. But they act ridiculously. I know that afterwards they make a joke of me—or rather, of themselves. But as long as they sit at my table they behave as though the Prince of Wales had appeared to them. But Brum is a nice fellow. He's so unceremonious, that recently, at the Derby, he rushed down from the grand-stand and drove home in a carriage in which a couple of boys were singing the Cambridge song."

"Oh well," said Caroline. "You are coming this evening?"

Geordie looked at her thoughtfully. She had a pretty, snub nose, and an entrancing figure. Her complexion was really uncommonly pink and white, and though she had fresh, marine eyes, they had an intelligent look. Yet it annoyed him that she should always be wanting to move him in some definite direction.

A few weeks later he met Lady Melbourne just as he turned out of Hyde Park. She invited him to get into her carriage and took him a short distance with her.

"Well, how did you like my brother-in-law the other day?" she asked, resting her arm on the side of the carriage.

Geordie had to think for a moment whom she meant.

"Nice, really decent," he said then. "I don't

think the idea would ever occur to that man that Caroline could deceive him."

"And why should it, Geordie? He doesn't deceive her himself. Have you ever yet met anyone who judges other than by his own abilities?"

"Only you, Lady Melbourne."

"It seems to me," said Lady Melbourne, displeased as she always was when the conversation was about herself, "you have been bored lately, Geordie. If you like, you may come to dinner this evening."

She opened the carriage door to get out, and Geordie went in with her to have a game of billiards.

When he observed her movements during the game, he realized how intimate was the atmosphere around her, and how stimulated, and at the same time satisfied, he felt with her. Now that he thought of it, he never felt so content with Caroline. But then Caroline would never have played billiards. Moreover, one could talk more, and differently, to Lady Melbourne than to almost any other woman he knew. She really did resemble Hobby. Strangely enough, Hobby did not care very much for her, and had only been once at her house. And when Geordie thought carefully about it, he had to admit that this atmosphere of friendship around Lady Melbourne was not only fascinating but practical. Without ever saying very much, Lady Melbourne had set right for him a number of unpleasant left-overs from the past—offenses, misunderstandings. She seemed to sense everything that touched her friends, and she was wonderfully silent about it all. What could she have been like as a young woman?

"Don't come too late, Geordie."

"Of course not."

"Unquestionably Lady Melbourne could still have

plenty of success with young people," thought Geordie on his way home. But she was clever enough not to seek those successes which she could not hope to keep. And that really was her own affair.

He slept two hours and dressed.

At dinner he wondered why Lady Melbourne had put him next to a secretary of the Exchequer, whose conversation was extraordinarily arid.

When they rose from the table, Lady Melbourne came over to him. "I'm sure you have been bored, Geordie. I had other plans for you, but that man pleaded with me to put him next to you. He wanted some information from you about your travels, taxes and so on."

"A strange notion," said Geordie. "If I hadn't happened to ask him in which street his ministry was, I should have carried away the pleasant conviction that he was a deaf mute."

At that moment, a dark young girl, with bright eyes and a shambling walk, came up to Lady Melbourne and apologized for arriving late; she had had an accident to her carriage.

"May I introduce my niece, Jessy Oxford," said Lady Melbourne. "She was to have been your dinner partner."

"With pleasure. I knew your brother at Harrow," said Geordie.

"He is coming to London tomorrow," said the girl, smiling. "The day after we are riding together to County Hall to see our grandmother."

"I should very much like to see Dick again," said Geordie thoughtfully.

"Come to County Hall with us," said the girl, looking calmly at him.

"Gladly." They shook hands.

On the way he saw how well and gracefully she rode. She had grown up in the country, was not exceptionally intelligent, but was very fresh. She spoke unaffectedly and loved anything connected with nature and mischief, even more passionately than do most schoolgirls. Yet she was well enough brought up not to show it.

When they returned in the evening, it was moonlight, and they finished up with a short gallop across the fields. On the outskirts of the city they hired a carriage and had the horses sent home.

Geordie did not go to Caroline either the next day or the day after. The more he avoided her, the more he liked certain things about the young girl whose brother had gone away again. For example, even when she had just come from her bath there was a faint horsey smell about her. Caroline, on the contrary, was inclined to be too deliberately perfumed. It was the same with her movements. Caroline was too apt to say exactly the same thing to everybody when she greeted or said good-bye to him. And her large, lovely movements lost their charm because she indulged them too often.

Jessy Oxford, on the contrary, was more slovenly. She was not precisely an adornment to a drawing room, yet it excited him just to think of her rather shambling walk. She was also somewhat cunning and very wild, which was splendid after Caroline Lamb's nuances.

One day, as she was leaving him, he rang, but detained her a moment by the arm.

"Why do you do that?"

"Because of the servant," he said gently.

She ought not meet anyone. But she could not be made to understand that that was why he rang.

She imagined that, if one rang, somebody must come. He laughed at her lack of understanding, thought it nice, but rather stupid.

Caroline he hardly ever saw any more. At first she acted as though she noticed nothing. But when Geordie's absences became longer and more conspicuous, she grew anxious. As far as that went, she would not have grudged him seven more nieces. But she had calculated on Jessy Oxford's being only a side-dish. Suddenly she feared that she was going to lose Geordie altogether. From that moment on, she began to make stupid mistakes.

Several times when Geordie remained away from her she went unannounced to his house and once, when he was not there, she made a scene because she thought Fletcher was lying. Geordie found all this extremely unpleasant. He simply could not conceive that this discreet woman, who had a sarcastic or a haughty remark for everyone, was pining away at the thought that she would no longer be seen in public with him.

He could not imagine that the Caroline who had once said she would walk naked to St. James' for him, could so rapidly be changed by intellectual jealousy and wounded egoism into a woman so little like the Caroline he knew. But she could not easily get over the fact that she had been dropped very coolly by the way.

One evening Geordie was playing billiards with Lady Melbourne and Jessy Oxford. Jessy, who played well, had to make her final shot on two cushions. But she could not be persuaded to do it, since the others, who had no odds, did not have to. She simply could not understand it.

"She is really very obtuse," said Geordie, when

the game was over and Jessy had gone into the next room.

"You are a little fastidious, Geordie. I am afraid that the opposite doesn't please you, either."

Geordie was taken aback and stood, holding the chalk in his hand.

"I do find it difficult," he said, smiling.

"Or too easy," said Lady Melbourne. "You are so frightfully young, Geordie, and you say to everybody: either—or. I sometimes wish you could more artfully balance the opportunities life offers you. Don't laugh at my wisdom. Unfortunately, wisdom is cheap, when all that remains of one's contact with life is what one hears about it."

A few weeks passed and Geordie thought occasionally of that conversation. She was right about this business of balancing. Now that Caroline, through her grotesque attempts to retain him, had lost all charm for him, he found that Jessy Oxford did not always please him either. She was not suited to town life and was often as stupid as a fish from pining for the country. He felt much more keenly, too, her tremendous lack of interest in many things.

But as she was a jolly comrade, Geordie simply felt bored, without finding her disagreeable. He even thought of going into the country with her, but that was not advisable because of her brother. "Perhaps," he thought one morning, "I could rent a yacht and sail to Sicily with Jessy." He had had enough of Town. The London, into which he had so impetuously plunged, stifled him. London society, like everything else in the world, with which one has lived long enough to see through it, consisted essentially of intrigue and disillusion. What was he to do?

In the last analysis he did not understand women well enough to exist peaceably between these two, as Lady Melbourne had no doubt intended he should. They would probably have very well complemented one another could he have dissociated them.

So it was true,—what he had known ever since Mary Parker and the childish adventure at the park gates at Annesley,—he could not love!

One evening he came home earlier than usual and went straight to his bath. Fletcher heard him call suddenly. As he went in, he saw Geordie confronting Caroline Lamb's maid.

Geordie gave Fletcher one look. "Did *you* let her in?"

"No."

Geordie made three strides into his study. For an instant his eyes rested on the table. Then he came back.

"This means three years' imprisonment for you," he said coldly.

The girl, who was standing, pale and defiant against the wall, swayed at these words.

"You wouldn't bring that misfortune on me sir," she cried, terrified. "You know who sent me here."

"Give me your handbag," said Geordie. She gave it up at once.

"Take out what is in it," said Geordie, turning to Fletcher. The servant took out a packet of papers. Geordie looked at the envelopes. They were addressed to him in Caroline's handwriting.

"And now," said Geordie, "put the key on the table."

The girl was trembling in every limb.

"Now you can throw her out," said Geordie and left the room.

As he entered his study he felt suddenly stifled, so that he rushed to the window, opened it, and gazed out into the garden. It had been raining; the moist, fragrant air did him good.

During the night he slept badly. It was really repugnant, that a woman, whom he had held in his arms, should use the key he had given her to have her maid break into his house and search through his correspondence. But why did Caroline want her letters? It suddenly occurred to Geordie that he had left them lying about again. He rose and locked them away. As he turned the key, he felt a loathing for everything he knew.

He put on his dressing-gown and walked up and down in the garden. It smelt of trees. He was fed up with everything else.

In the morning he called Fletcher and asked him for the calendar on which his engagements were noted.

"Holland House. . . ?" he muttered after a time. "And I have never even refused." He did not seem especially satisfied. But there was nothing better.

He rang.

"Fletcher, tell them below that I shall want the carriage in an hour. And then pack. Everyday clothes."

"Your riding habit, too, sir?"

"Yes, Fletcher."

3.

GREYHOUNDS

At half past two Geordie drove through the deep shade of the meadows, with their isolated groups of trees, which surrounded Holland House, then through a narrow strip of woodland from which he could see the buildings. He saw that it was an old chateau which the owners had renovated.

At a quarter of three Geordie found Lady Holland in her library. He saw, on entering, that she had been somewhat abruptly roused from her siesta.

"Unfortunately, we have finished lunch," she said with a slight Syrian accent, "but I will have something prepared for you at once. I am very glad you have come."

Geordie readily believed her.

Lady Holland had not only brought her husband almost all the fig docks in Smyrna and Calamata as dowry, but, in consequence of her strange melange of bloods, had probably given the fastidious cultural note to the house as well.

Lord Holland belonged to one of the powerful banking dynasties of Manchester. The funds which he commanded were of such importance that not only the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but also the chief of the Foreign Ministry came to his "modest dinners" in Picadilly. But the Hollands were not very keen on politics. They preferred, God alone knows why, the gentlemen of the laurel.

"Thanks very much, I've already lunched," said Geordie.

"I will show you to your room at once," said Lady Holland nervously. She could hardly rise, she was so fat. "Do you keep dogs, Lord Byron?"

"Newfoundlands."

"And have you not brought them with you?"

She showed Geordie an animal lying on a divan, and covered with a silk robe. She bent over it until her brown cheek touched its coat and raised the dog, half with her hand, half against her face.

"I don't believe I should ever recover, if anything were to happen to this creature. I can say so to you because you keep dogs. But I could not say it to Holland even in fun."

She rang.

"Take the dog out, Jack," she said to the servant.

"What do you think is the best diet for dogs?" she asked eagerly. "I am against meat! Milk, and rice,—warm, of course,—is the best thing, don't you think so too?"

"Certainly," said Geordie, "for the last two months, I've eaten nothing else."

"Heavens," said Lady Holland, turning on the stairs, "is that a joke?"

It was four o'clock before he finally got out into the meadows. There were a few clumps of trees at least three hundred years old. Some one had once had the idea of making a French garden, with clipped hedges, but the attempt had foundered on the first yew hedge. It stood rather ridiculously, near two tall lime trees, between the wood and a little brook.

As Geordie rounded the hedge a low whistle escaped him.

On the other side of the brook, and somewhat hidden by hazel bushes, three large greyhounds were

lying on their bellies, howling and beating the ground with their tails, their eyes glued to one spot. Then they were apparently called and leaped up. At the same moment, he saw a girl, standing beside the bushes, with her back to him. He was only able to see, while she played with the dogs, that she had hair cut short, and a sleeveless dress that just reached her knees. Obviously, it pleased her immensely to let the dogs jump for her hands, for she was quite shaken with silent laughter.

Then she turned sideways and Geordie saw that it was Augusta Leigh. At that moment he felt perfectly happy.

He called to her; she turned round and gave him a remarkably impenetrable look.

"Ah, Geordie," she said, astonished, "the bridge is over there."

"It doesn't help one a bit," thought Augusta, as he crossed the foot-bridge behind the elms. "It's four years since we were at Newstead Abbey. How old these meetings make one feel. Down!" she called to the greyhounds who were prancing around Geordie's knees.

"I had no idea you were here." He sat down on the grass.

"Odd that I should be, isn't it, Geordie, with Six Mile Bottom only five miles away?"

Geordie went suddenly red. He was ashamed not to have thought of it, and that he had given so little thought to his sister.

"Well," he said, embarrassed, "I should frightfully like to come down to Six Mile Bottom some time."

"A little late, Geordie. Unfortunately, it's up for sale."

"Pardon," murmured Geordie, "I did not know that."

"Leigh is so thoroughly bankrupt, that he would certainly be overjoyed if you returned him the couple of pounds he lent you four years ago," said A, stooping to tie her shoe lace.

"I should be so glad if you'd come and stay with me in London," said Geordie.

Suddenly Augusta laughed through her tears.

"How kind you are, Geordie. But as dame du palais, I always have lodgings at St. James'. And I should certainly never think of living in your house."

Her eyes never altered, do what she would with her face. Her nose was Augusta's best feature; it was straight, small and ever so slightly turned up at the end. Her forehead lay wide between strangely sunken temples. Now that she paid no further attention to the dogs, one of the greyhounds came and laid his forepaws on her shoulders.

Augusta squinted back at him. Her eyes slanted obliquely towards her temples; apparently she always squinted a little. Her skin was especially lovely, such a mixture of tawny and bronze that one never noticed the pores. It was such a smooth, cool skin as Geordie had rarely ever seen.

"That isn't nice of you, Augusta," said Geordie quietly. "I sent you all my books, and you've never even written to me."

Augusta got up suddenly, took his head between her hands, and looked down at him a little obliquely.

"How handsome you have got to be, Geordie," she said quietly. She let her lips pout a little and stood looking like a girl of seventeen.

At that moment Geordie saw a tiny white cloud

float across her pupils, and, as he rose, he saw the same cloud above her in the sky.

Augusta looked at her wrist watch. "We must go in if we want any tea," she said.

As they came around the yew hedge, A held something up between her fingers. "It's really sad that one gets older," she sighed in a melancholy way, and Geordie saw a gray hair between her finger-tips.

"Don't imagine that I didn't see you pull it out of the dog's fur," he said unfeelingly.

"That was a horrid observation." She gazed at Geordie for a long while with her clear eyes, and while she was doing so, began to smile.

"I had just had such a frightful dread of growing old when you came," she went on.

She whistled to the dogs who had started to chase a hare. "Small! Pisto!"

There was really more of the boy about her than the girl. Her shoulders were broader than her hips, and it was unthinkable that she should ever have children. She had to run after the dogs who had buried their narrow muzzles in a molehill.

"They're positive pigs," she said, "but they really are very beautiful."

She bent down and wiped their noses with her handkerchief. Then she opened the jaws of each and searched carefully to see if they had anything in their mouths.

When she let them go up at the house, they sped from her hands like two arrows, straight back to the yew hedge.

And so, for a second time, Geordie climbed the steps of Holland House. But he felt much more care-free and happier than the first.

4.

THE WATERFALL

Lord Holland was the sort of man who always put his hands in his pockets about the time when he needed to use them. Moreover, when he had to stand, he continually shifted from one foot to the other. Although an Englishman from Manchester, his tawny complexion, the sparse hairs at his temples and his long face made him even more a Syrian type than his wife.

"What do you hear from Six Mile Bottom?" he asked, sugaring his tea while standing.

"Still no buyer," said Augusta.

"If there were no races at Newmarket, you could sell the estate easily," said Holland, near-sightedly studying the handle of his cup. "The race-goers must damage the crops."

"That only happened once," answered Augusta, "and then Leigh was more than covered by insurance."

Geordie had no idea that Holland had been waiting for years to buy Six Mile Bottom for a song. Like so many great financiers he had in him inexplicable spots of the pettiest avarice and greed. Often when he came down to his estate on Saturday, he would immediately check all the weekly accounts for the kitchen.

Augusta knew all about that, and though she gazed at the Hollands like an innocent child, she was determined to make the banker pay through the nose.

"Strange, but I have never yet heard of that kind of insurance," said Holland dryly.

"Leigh introduced it," answered Augusta calmly, looking him in the eye, "and now nearly all our neighbors have taken it up."

Geordie heard something in her voice which warned him that further discussion about the estate must cease. It was obvious that her story was to shield her husband. The Hollands showed by their faces that the idea that Leigh should ever introduce a new form of insurance, was sending them into incredulous ecstacies.

Augusta could not bear to have anybody connected with her the subject of conversation. Even against Leigh she never allowed anything to be said, although the only time she saw him was when he came to Newmarket for the races. Nevertheless, their marriage was never troubled, for each, in his own way, got along quite well by leaving the other in peace. A lived at St. James' or on the estate, and the Colonel was only happy where there were starting signals, jockeys and bookmakers. He did not really have horse sense, but without the business of racing he could not live. Three quarters of his day alone was needed for his turf correspondence.

In spite of everything, Augusta did not want it said that Leigh had neglected the estate, though without his knowing, or any one's else suspecting it, she was even then making arrangements to have him declared incompetent. But that was entirely her own affair.

When she smiled sometimes she let her lower lip pout, which made her look somewhat idiotic. The Hollands put on affectionate expressions as though they were in love with this helpless child. Geordie

was surprised to realize that Augusta and her way of smiling struck him as strangely fascinating.

"Give me a cigarette, Holl," she said, after the soup, putting her head down on her shoulder. The Hollands wondered why Geordie was so exuberant at table.

After dinner Augusta went up to her brother and whispered to him, "You must say at once that you have a sore throat, or else they'll make you read something aloud."

It was a very merry evening.

The next morning Geordie overslept, and when he appeared at breakfast, only A was still at the table, stirring her tea with her spoon.

She looked very happy and informed Geordie that they had arranged a picnic for the afternoon.

Lord Holland was already among his espaliers. He raved about nature and used to get up at six every morning to bind up the little peach branches with bast. His wife had been called away by Jack because the dog had availed himself of an unguarded moment to run down to the cellar and eat a fish-head, which did not agree with him.

"Are you still hungry?" asked Geordie when A, on rising, laid two apples on her plate.

"We can't go for a long ride, Geordie," she remarked absently, "but if you care to come, we can get in two hours." Her brother nodded and she put the apples in her pocket.

When they had ridden sufficiently far from the house at a smart trot, Augusta wheeled around, and they passed the yew hedge into a meadow which was shut off from the rear of the house by a hedge of raspberries. Geordie just caught sight of a girl, who set down a pail and disappeared into the bushes.

A checked her horse before two posts not more than a yard apart, took the apples out of her pocket and set them on the posts. Ten yards behind the posts stood the pail of water. "Now Geordie," she said, "we'll go back twenty yards and then ride between the posts. When you have got an apple you must throw it into the pail. Do you understand?"

"I think I understand," said Geordie. "What is the idea—betting?"

She did not answer, being too busy measuring off a good start. After this contest they even had time to walk the horses through the meadows for an hour, and then have a short gallop in the woods.

It was a beautiful summer morning with a little breeze. From the edge of the woods they looked across the level plain of cornfields, over which was a light haze. Occasionally there was a flash from the scythes of the laborers cutting hay.

They returned to the house through the paddock. Geordie had forgotten to look at his watch, but they were back just about on the minute. They still had time to change.

When Geordie came down again, he met the two owners of Holland House, waiting in the hall. Five minutes passed while Geordie listened to Lady Holland's account of how Jack had taken the remains of a gill-flap out of her darling's throat, with the sugar tongs. Holland walked up and down on the terrace, his hands clasped behind his back; he had already heard the story. Then he came in and looked at the clock.

"I can't understand my sister," said Geordie, going to her door and knocking. As there was no reply, he lifted the latch and walked in.

"Hallo," called Augusta from the next room.

"But A, why don't you come?" said Geordie, going to the door. Then he recoiled a little.

"Why, Geordie, it's you!" said Augusta, in surprise. "I thought it was the maid, bringing my clothes."

Augusta was standing under a shower in the middle of her bath. Her hair was so plastered down that the water was running over her in a waterfall. Her arms were upraised. With her hands she was snatching at the water, which streamed down over her golden brown shoulders and her tiny breasts, that almost disappeared in the outstretched muscles of her arms. Then it flowed in a smooth wave into the hollow where Augusta's flat, taut belly lay like a shell between her breast bone and the arch of her ribs. There the water divided into two streams, flowing along her hips till it reached her ankles.

When Augusta noticed Geordie standing in the door, she turned somewhat to one side.

He saw how narrow her hips were. But her legs were girlish and round, and the water flowed along them as over two beautiful, rounded columns. Augusta's whole body was so brown that the water seemed to dash, foaming, over bronze. Geordie stood for an instant as if turned to stone. He was so affected by the situation that he grew red to the roots of his hair.

"I will call your maid immediately," he said quickly and went out.

He heard Augusta in the next room, irritably calling after him to hand her a bath towel.

Five minutes later she was in the hall, making her apologies. The maid had stayed, chattering in the kitchen, with her clothes, and she had to remain under the shower until she appeared.

"Why did you run away?" she asked, turning to her brother. "Didn't you hear me?"

"No," said Geordie.

"You can just as well discuss that in the carriage," said Holland, putting his head in the door.

During the first part of the picnic, Geordie hardly spoke at all. Later his mood changed and he was quite merry. On the return home, Augusta was in such high spirits that she mimicked all the people in Holland House. Geordie was just as infatuated with her strange way of being gay as were the Hollands.

The next morning Geordie was the first down to breakfast, and waited for Augusta. When she was not near him, he was no longer contented. There was something about her that he had never yet seen in another human being. Whether she was playing pranks or talking seriously to him, it made no difference. It was the way she affected one that was everything in her case.

The Hollands amused themselves for three days, watching how Geordie admired his sister.

"Really, everything that she says is quite ordinary," said Holland, "and her ideas are not very original, and yet she is an extraordinary person."

"I had imagined Geordie as more melancholy," said his wife, and sat down by the window.

"Even stupid people always improve in the country. I've noticed that for at least twenty years," said Holland. "But intelligent people all go a little mad here."

"When I want to see the mildly insane," replied Lady Holland, "there are excellent theaters in London where I can go."

Holland shifted from one foot to the other several

times. Then he went to the window. He was waiting for his carriage, for he had to be in town shortly. While he gazed out into the park, his two guests strolled across the lawn below.

"Doesn't it seem to you as if Geordie is limping?" asked Lady Holland, rubbing her elbow, which she had bumped in turning around.

"What do you mean by 'limp'?" said Holland, who saw his carriage coming and whose ideas were obviously running in another direction than his wife's. "They won't be able to keep Six Mile Bottom another two months."

5.

PIPIN

Two days later Augusta Leigh was lying on the grass by the fish pond. She had the sun at her back, and put her jacket under her head. Every time Geordie began to speak, she laid her fingers meaningfully on her lips, and continued to gaze at the sky where one lone cloud, not large, but then again, not small, was very leisurely floating. After a time she had mercy, and squinted over her shoulder at her brother.

"What are you thinking about, Geordie?"

Geordie laughed a little. "Honor bright?"

"Honor bright, Geordie."

"I was thinking that a week ago I meant to sell a nice farm from the Newstead Abbey lands, in order to run off to Sicily with Lady Oxford. And just now I thought: how idiotic."

Augusta sat up. She stared at Geordie as at a fallen angel.

"What are *you* thinking, Augusta?"

"I was thinking that that would have made a bigger scandal than when your father took my mother on a similar excursion." Augusta was terribly angry. Her eyes flashed. "But at least I do not think our charming father spread the news everywhere beforehand."

Geordie had hit his sister in a vulnerable spot. She simply could not physically endure to have other people's intimacies mentioned in her presence. She herself, though she made fun of everyone in a harm-

less way, always spoke of other people as of fine human beings—or she kept quite silent. Until lunch time, Augusta would not honor her brother with further conversation. Meanwhile Geordie had time to reflect how difficult it is to make clear to one's sister that one is fond of her.

Lunch was served under an awning in the garden.

"The cooking is wonderful, dear Lady Holland," said Augusta. "But did you hire an African for the dessert?"

She was momentarily occupied with a fruit salad served in a pineapple.

"You are very honest," said Lady Holland magnanimously, "and I think you are quite right. This is an impossible way to serve it."

"Honesty is a family inheritance with us," replied Augusta quietly. "Geordie possesses it so strongly at times that he is unbearable." She did not look at him, but he reddened slightly. After lunch she was herself again.

She did not appear at tea, and he saw her later, standing by the fish pool, attentively watching the Holland's Angora cat try to scoop one of the fat goldfish out of the water. It succeeded at last, by a lightning-like stroke of its paw, in getting the quivering bit of gold on the grass. Then it carried off the fish, letting it drop from time to time, and peering back for admiration. Augusta rushed over in time to recover the spoils and throw it back into the water.

"It's settled," she said when she saw Geordie. "In two days I will again confer with Colonel Leigh at Six Mile Bottom over a huge mountain of papers." While she was speaking she stared at her shoes.

At that moment Geordie felt an unnatural sort of

peace. He saw how the sunlight fell, slanting, behind the park so that it cast a long shadow. From the bit of woodland a sadness spread slowly across the meadows to them.

So Augusta was going off to Leigh, whom he had hated, even as a child, before he ever knew him. He thought of the flood of happiness that had rushed through his body when he had seen her that first day, with the dogs, behind the yew hedge. Yet all the time, both their feelings had been as he remembered them when they were children, in Lady Holderness' garden, when Augusta had sat on the branch, and he had admired his big sister, whom he did not know. He no longer even thought of Augusta as going away, and he had to smile at his foolishness. But in doing so, a look of anger appeared on his face.

Augusta blinked at the light. She looked as though his perplexity amused her.

"We lead remarkable lives, Augusta. We see one another once every four years, and then it is all over in a moment."

"Unfortunately," said Augusta.

She had drawn up the corners of her mouth as if she heard something painful. But Geordie saw that this expression was clouded by a shadow.

Half an hour later Geordie sat on the steps and watched the cloud which, since morning, had not succeeded in floating beyond the cornfields. He did not know what he was thinking of.

Then he saw Augusta, with the dogs leaping round her, run across the meadows, over the brook, till she disappeared at the edge of the woods. She had not noticed him and he went back to contemplating.

In three minutes, Augusta emerged from the woods at a point where she could not be seen from Holland House. At a bend in the road stood a peasant, who touched his cap and handed her a letter. She had a struggle to keep the dogs from knocking him down. She spoke a word or two to the man, nodded to him and went back into the woods, where she opened and read the letter. She remained as motionless as one of the park statues would have done, had some one thrust a piece of paper into its hand.

After a short time she whistled to the dogs, swung in a circle through the woods and, in twenty minutes, came across the meadow to the spot where Geordie was still sitting with his arms slung round his knees.

"Why did you rush off like that just now?" asked her brother.

"Because I wanted to stretch my legs."

In vain did Geordie ask himself if Augusta was keeping something from him. There was a great deal about Augusta of which he knew nothing at all. For example, he did not know that every day, at the same hour and the same place, she received her mail and the news from Six Mile Bottom. She did not care to be questioned either by Holland or his wife, and there were many names and stamps on her letters that would have made them curious. No one at Holland House had any idea how Augusta racked her brain daily to prevent the ruin at Six Mile Bottom.

The next morning A surprised her brother by appearing at breakfast in her traveling clothes. He had not expected it so quickly.

"I shall certainly be in London quite soon," she

said, while she cut up an orange, "and, as usual, you won't like it at all if I visit you there."

"I hope you really don't believe that," said Geordie, rising.

Before the carriage came, Augusta stood for a few minutes in the breakfast room, looking at the engravings with as much attention as if she were noticing them for the first time. Holland paced up and down the room, and his wife stood by the window and looked toward the coach house. Geordie stood beside A and stared at the engravings. They were mostly famous generals: William the Conquerer, with a banner, Godfrey of Bouillon, Richard the Lion Heart on horseback, Louis the Pious on a ship. . . . There was an enormous clutter of small engravings, covering the wall like a tapestry.

Suddenly A took one of them off its hook, and wrote "Bye-bye" with her lipstick, on the glass. Geordie took it from her hand. It was an engraving of Pipin. The little king stood, rather accusingly, with nothing in his hand but the three blood-red letters.

A laughed lightly while Geordie wiped the pomade from the glass with the back of his hand and hung the engraving in its place again.

"He looks a little like you," he said.

Two minutes later Augusta was waving good-bye from the midst of a cloud of dogs and flapping hens. Geordie stood still, staring so fixedly into thin air that he did not even hear Lady Holland ask him twice if he would go in with her. The next day he went back to London.

Fletcher pondered why his master never went out. He received nobody and paid no calls, but buried himself in his library and read. As his master was

given to fits of reading, Fletcher quieted his fears till he entered with a table full of tea things and observed that Geordie was staring into space.

"Will you take rum or cognac?" he asked when he had poured the tea. His master raised his eyes and appeared so astonished to see Fletcher that for a while he stared at him.

"Of course you may go out," he said, and gazed at his book again. This was so unnatural that Fletcher left, shaking his head. Neither in love nor in debt had Geordie ever been absent-minded. Fletcher knew exactly how his master reacted to the joys of life. This behavior was new, but Fletcher could find no new cause for it.

Geordie wanted to be alone, but felt driven by a terrible restlessness. Towards evening he went out. At a street corner in Piccadilly he was overtaken by a carriage, and had just time to spring to one side as he recognized Caroline Lamb. She had not noticed him and the carriage passed swiftly on. Geordie stood in the middle of the street and bit his lips. Then he went home and called Fletcher to the library.

"Is today Wednesday?" he asked. "Good. By the way, do you know Six Mile Bottom?"

Fletcher, who was a zealous reader of those papers which specialized in accounts of the doings of certain classes, nodded. He had noticed for two months that Six Mile Bottom was for sale.

"It is Colonel Leigh's estate, unless I am mistaken, and if I may be allowed to say so, I hope it will remain his."

"I did not ask you for your opinion," said Geordie. "I want everything packed and the carriage ready

early Friday morning. You are going down there with me."

Fletcher bowed and went out. Sometimes Geordie was familiar with him, sometimes not, but Fletcher had never yet succeeded in discovering the laws by which Geordie acted.

From the moment when he had determined to ignore Augusta's wish that he should leave her in peace at Six Mile Bottom, Geordie was another creature. His restlessness left him completely. He whistled through his teeth, went to the window and looked out. Caroline, in her carriage, had looked like a half-starved bird of prey. He found it inconceivable that he had ever loved her.

Before his eyes he saw the meadows and the raspberry hedge at Holland House. The sight of the balustrade made him instantly content. Six Mile Bottom must be quite like that. That was very nice, for now he came to think of it, he had no desire to work or to ride or to go out. He did not want to talk to anybody, and he had no appetite. The one thing that he wanted was to be together with Augusta again. It had made him quite melancholy when he was suddenly left alone in Holland House.

Thursday evening he sat at his desk. Suddenly he noticed a shadow fall across his paper, but he took no notice, thinking Fletcher had passed through the room. Then he felt two hands over his eyes.

"Well?"

"Pipin." He stood before her, blushing hotly.

Augusta made a face as though she wanted to cry. So she was laughing inwardly!

"Now you mustn't pretend that I come just at the right time. I see the contrary very plainly," said Augusta. "But I've only come to wash my hands and

say how do you do. Yesterday evening I received orders to present myself at St. James', my princess can't get through the court ball without me. I have come straight to you in my traveling clothes, for if I had gone there first, I should have had to change and then I should never have got away again. Where is your bathroom?"

"It's only eight o'clock, so you can easily dine with me. And if you imagine you've come inopportunely —well, it's nonsense. I'll tell Fletcher at once to put a pair of my pyjamas in the bathroom. Then you can make yourself comfortable, and you really don't need to be at St. James' before midnight."

"That's a good idea," said Augusta.

He rang.

"Set a place for Mrs. Leigh," he said to Fletcher, "and come along. This is the bathroom, Augusta," he turned to his sister. He went into the next room and rummaged through a drawer. "Tell Annie to take that to my sister, and to stay with her until she has finished her bath." He gave the servant a pair of blue pyjamas, and a sleeveless dressing gown with a girdle.

Twenty minutes later Augusta entered in her new costume, looking charming. "Really, you ought to have turned into a Levantine as well, Geordie. But what is the matter with you?"

"With me?"

"Are you feverish?" A felt his pulse. "Your hands are cold," she said more calmly, and glanced hesitantly at his forehead.

"Of course my hands are cold. I am hungry."

Augusta looked quietly at him and sat down.

"I am not a bit hungry. But you have a very nice

place here, Geordie. And three kinds of bath salts. Why are you looking at me so seriously?"

Geordie laughed, but it sounded as though he were coughing. The meal was not very conversational. When it was over, Augusta rushed round into all the rooms, inspecting everything thoroughly. Then she sat down with the dogs.

Geordie pushed a cushion under her. "There is a cellar under this room, and it gets cold quickly on the floor. A little higher."

"Thanks, Geordie. Have you a cigarette? What nice dogs! I think I could forget St. James' with them."

"They are the offspring of Boatswain whom we had just buried at Newstead Abbey the first time you were there."

"Oh," said Augusta, looking up, surprised. Then she slowly blushed a deep crimson. She drew one of the dogs close against her. She knelt on the cushion and buried her hands playfully in its coat. "It's as soft as silk," she said.

At that moment Fletcher entered with the coffee, and could not understand why his master's sister gave him so enigmatic a look. When he glanced across at his master, he noticed that he seemed ill.

Augusta, still kneeling, gave the dog a push with her elbow and fastened her girdle more tightly. Her little breasts nestled small and pointed under the tightly drawn silk. Then, with a twist of her body, Augusta squatted back on her heels, and stretching her legs out, sat down again on the cushion.

"Oh, Geordie," she sighed contentedly, "you haven't any idea what impossible cushions Leigh's carriage has."

"Use my carriage from now on."

"Don't think of such a thing," said Augusta. "I've sat in soft-cushioned carriages that belonged to Leigh, too, but they've been pawned just as yours will be some day."

"Then you'll have to sit on your hands, Augusta," said Geordie, fencing. "Besides, my affairs are all in order, in case it interests you. Newstead Abbey is no longer mortgaged, and the lawsuit over the mine will be won as soon as the Courts sit again."

They looked at one another for an instant, breathlessly, shocked at the sharpness with which they had just spoken. They had both altered dreadfully in the past few days.

"Are you determined to make a saint of yourself, Geordie?" Augusta went on unrelentingly. "Ah, we shouldn't have had the same father."

At that moment she saw how deathly pale Geordie had gone. He rose and paced up and down a couple of times, his eyes closed, his face corpselike, while he seemed to clench his hands so tightly that the color left them.

She saw how he strove to exert a supernatural strength to remain calm. At last he stopped three paces from her. She knelt on the cushion, without noticing that her hand was in the Newfoundland's mouth, pressing down its underjaw.

"Augusta," he said in a hard voice, "if you had not come to Piccadilly tonight, which, as you see, was a great surprise to me, I must tell you that though I knew you did not want it, I was going down to Six Mile Bottom tomorrow."

She stared at her hands for a time, quite taken aback by Geordie's tone of voice. Then she looked again at her brother.

"You say, Geordie, that you would have come to

Six Mile Bottom tomorrow, though I begged you never to do so under the existing circumstances. Why should you want to do that?"

"Why do you ask that, when it is impossible for me to tell you?"

"Why?"

"Because we *did* have the same father."

"I don't understand you, Geordie," said Augusta softly, surprised. "I never knew my father."

Geordie stared at her.

Her voice had rung clear. Her eyes gazed at him in astonishment. But her slightly pendulous lower lip trembled as though with cold. A shudder passed from her breasts to her hips.

It lasted several seconds before Geordie grasped what he believed was impossible. "Augusta!"

"Oh!" he gasped, "oh!" He picked her up in his arms and carried her out. Fletcher was in the corridor and flattened himself against the wall, looking at them with horrified eyes.

Two hours later Geordie accompanied his sister through the garden and out the gate, and handed her into her carriage. It was so dark a night that he could only make out the glow of her face. When she had taken her seat, she leaned out and rubbed her head against his cheek, just as her greyhounds did.

As the carriage drove off she cried. It would only take her five minutes to reach St. James', time enough to dry her tears. But she was so joyful that they dried quickly. She arrived freshly powdered at St. James' and walked tranquilly up the steps.

As she entered her room, a subsiding tremor passed over her so that she had to close her eyes. It ran through all her muscles down to her fingertips,

and while everything went black about her, she felt that she had never yet experienced so profound an emotion.

She found her underwear and her evening clothes laid out. On the table were some flowers from the Princess. She imagined that Geordie must now be pacing back and forth in his room, grasping his dogs by their shaggy necks.

With that pleasant picture in mind, she began slowly to change before her mirror.

6.

"NO LETTERS?"

A SHORT time after this, Caroline Lamb paid a visit to her Aunt Melbourne. She went straight to the heart of the matter that had brought her as soon as Lady Melbourne came down to meet her in the billiard room.

"You know the Lord Proctor, don't you, dear Aunt Melbourne?"

Lady Melbourne nodded and inspected the tips of her niece's shoes through her lorgnette.

"I should very much like to meet him," said Caroline, inspecting with interest, on her own part, a small Tintoretto which had been hanging there since her childhood.

"Why, of course. Will Tuesday suit you? Let us say Tuesday, then, at ten, for dinner. Why don't you sit down, Caroline? I will have tea served." She never needed to order tea, it followed her.

"Give my niece a good dash of rum," she ordered the servant. "You look pale, Caroline," she said when the servant had gone. "I thought you were at Newmarket at the races."

"Yes, I was there yesterday," said Caroline, holding her cup directly in front of her mouth. "It was very nice, but wearing. On the way home we had a breakdown. Geordie and his sister drove a little ahead of us, on their way to Newstead Abbey, and we had to swallow their dust."

"Shall I invite anyone else for you Tuesday?"

"Thanks," said her niece, "it is always nicest here when the party is small."

"That's interesting news to me," thought Lady Melbourne, as Caroline disappeared with her last observation. Then she played billiards by herself for a half hour. She seldom did so, for it was not the game, but the contest, that attracted her. As she caromed she pondered deeply.

"Good God," she said finally, as she put back her cue, and narrowed her eyes in disapprobation, "what has happened . . . ?"

When Geordie opened his shutters the morning after Augusta's visit, he was astonished to see a London street. He had waked up with the fixed idea that he was at Holland house, and was astonished not to see cornfields and trees from his window. Fletcher came when he rang.

"No letters?"

"No letters have come, my lord," said the man.

Geordie spent a restless morning. At two o'clock a note arrived from A in which she informed him she had only just waked up. Leigh, who was in London, had made a luncheon engagement with her. She announced her presence for that evening.

Geordie breathed again, and looked up from the letter directly into Fletcher's eyes. The latter immediately glanced down.

"Mrs. Leigh will dine here tonight," he said to the servant. "The carriage must be kept ready. Take care that everything is prepared so that Mrs. Leigh can change easily, and buy irises or, if you can't get them, any other blue flower for the table. You can take the dogs with you when you go out." Thereupon he sat himself down at his desk.

Fletcher's face again assumed a normal expression as he went down the street. He had been so terrified the night before that he was half afraid to find his master in a different state from that in which he actually proved to be. He had received very precise instructions, and that calmed him. His faithfulness knew not the vanity that approves or condemns. He belonged to those faithful servants for whom there is neither good nor evil, and no criticism whatsoever, where their master is concerned,—only his welfare. His master had breakfasted well that morning, and spoken lucidly, so everything was in order.

Geordie remained rather a long time at his desk. He put a difficult morning behind him. When he had opened his shutters he was still a very happy man. But shortly afterwards it occurred to him that he probably ought to reassure Augusta. When no letter came, he was afraid that she was a badly shaken woman. Then his nerves played him a trick. Had she gone away? What did Augusta think of it all? And why did she not write, at least a line? He could hardly think logically any longer.

When her note came he grew quiet for a while.

But later his thoughts began to busy themselves more with the content of her note. Probably no man, if ever any had been in a situation like his, had ever received a note like that; nothing in it but an appointment.

At seven came another letter from Augusta.

This one he did not open until Fletcher had left the room.

"Dear Geordie," she wrote in a hasty scrawl, "it is dreadful to have to disappoint you, but I must dine with Leigh this evening. It is better for me to

be alone with him. For affairs at Six Mile Bottom must be put in order at last, and I am going to do it. I am going down with him tomorrow and arrange everything. We shall pass your lodgings at about seven tomorrow morning, and, if you want to come, will drop you at Holland House. Just at present I don't want you to be in all the mess at Six Mile Bottom. Send me a line if you will come. Augusta."

This healthy, matter of fact letter for the moment drove away all the demonic shadows which Geordie had seen in every corner.

Fletcher appeared with surprising speed when he rang. "Mrs. Leigh is not coming. You can eat the omelette that was made for my sister from the Newstead recipe. I will take only a glass of milk."

"Very good," said Fletcher.

"Early tomorrow morning I am going into the country with Colonel Leigh. Send a note to St. James', saying that I will come, and then pack. You can remain in London."

An hour later Geordie rang again. It had occurred to him that three people would travel more comfortably in his big carriage, than in Leigh's rattle-trap traveling coach. He ordered Fletcher to send somebody to St. James' with a note.

"You can put the irises in my carriage, but don't forget to put water in the holders."

"Do you wish anything else?" asked Fletcher, before retiring for the night.

"How was the omelette?" asked Geordie, looking searchingly at Fletcher.

"I believe," replied Fletcher, "that it was very

good, sir." But his forehead took on a faint salmon hue.

"So it seems," said Geordie with a strange glance at the Newfoundland's jaws.

Fletcher shared Geordie's dislike for omelettes, though fourteen years earlier they had been his favorite dish. Almost nothing changes so definitely as a taste for eggs. He was glad when Geordie said good-night to him without adding anything.

Next morning Geordie called for the Leighs who entered the carriage together. During the journey he was irritated by Leigh's outspoken rage at his situation. That situation was well enough known, and Geordie, sitting for hours listening to Leigh's talk, was embarrassed for Augusta's sake. At last it got to be too much for him, to hear Leigh blaming everything in the world for his misfortunes, when everyone knew the cause of the bankruptcy was Leigh.

"You must either sell or get a manager," he said angrily. "But as nobody seems to be buying, you had better give up the management. For there isn't a soul who would lend you ten pounds on the estate as long as you are managing it yourself."

"Of course, I can shoot myself at once," answered Leigh, reddening.

Augusta stared, disconcerted, at Geordie while he was speaking. He had touched the heart of the struggle she had been secretly and unsuccessfully waging with the Colonel for years. For Leigh steadfastly refused to give up the management, because unless he kept the accounts, he could not conceal his disbursements. He sat silent until they were in the neighborhood of Holland House. At the little garden gate he ordered the carriage to stop and, with a

grim smile, said, "Now I must ask something quite extraordinary of you. That is, that you will please get out of your own carriage and walk up through the park. I'd have a stroke if I had to look at that hook-nose fellow up there. Jim can carry your luggage to the terrace."

Leigh had once tried to get a small mortgage from Lord Holland, but had gone back home with nothing more than a store of new Stock Exchange witticisms.

"I'll come over to see you as soon as I can, and I'll send back your carriage tonight," said A, looking quite babyish beside Leigh's nutcracker face.

Geordie passed hastily through the park.

"That's another of my tormenters," growled Leigh, while they waited for Jim. Leigh hated everybody who did not agree with his financial plans. Augusta laughed secretly at the remark all the way to Six Mile Bottom. She had never thought Leigh very amusing, but on the day when she decisively took all business matters out of his hands, she found him irresistibly funny.

Lady Holland was mildly astonished as she saw her guest arrive on foot. The last time he had appeared she was flattered, but his departure had been too hasty to have had a particularly polite effect. She was, however, accustomed to oddities and did not trouble her head about it. At first she thought there must be something behind this reappearance, but as nothing unusual occurred, she decided he wanted to work, which flattered her again.

On the third day Augusta Leigh came to visit her brother.

"I don't know where your brother is, dear Mrs. Leigh," said Lady Holland. "I imagine he's walk-

ing in the park, I'll have somebody look for him at once."

The dog was not well, and Lady Holland was worried. In that frame of mind, she always pursed her lips so that one expected her to go on speaking long after she was finished. Although she was good-natured, she had one peculiarity that she shared with many fat women, she could not help looking at the dark side of things.

"I'm afraid that so much walking is bad for his foot," she added as Geordie suddenly appeared.

At that moment Augusta looked so strangely at Lady Holland, out of her gray eyes, that a sudden cold shiver ran down the latter's spine.

After lunch brother and sister went down to the pond, and Augusta placed her shawl under her head. A gentle breeze came from the pine woods, making the lawn smell suddenly much more fragrant. Augusta could just make out the line of the cornfields in the plain below.

"Well, it's happened," she said at last. "Leigh was very stubborn, and it took two days to get him that far. But then we put the screws on him and he had to sign. Six Mile Bottom has been sold to a syndicate, but only for form's sake. The money has been paid to my account, but only on condition that he has no more to do with the business, and as that was the only possible salvation, he finally understood it. I now have a first class manager for Six Mile Bottom, working on a rationalization plan. Leigh will get a very decent little income on which he can manage. Well—that's that. It is possible that I'll fall asleep in the middle of a sentence. It was six o'clock this morning before he finally signed his rights away. Pardon, Geordie." She yawned, so

that, as with a kitten, it flowed languorously from the corner of her mouth slowly over her whole body.

Geordie was quite struck by A's courage. She had done all that—and without asking his advice.

"You'll never again have such trouble, I promise you. I never lent Leigh anything because he would simply have taken it to a bookmaker."

"You may tell such pathetic things to Lady Oxford in Palermo, Geordie. It's a lovely place, and Jessy will take them tragically too, perhaps. But spare me."

She laughed at Geordie's sentimentality. He was really behaving very decently, but what he said was quite indifferent to her.

"Don't move, if you want to pretend you're asleep," said Geordie. "Holland is standing up there on the terrace."

Their glances met at that moment. Under her brother's glance, Augusta stretched herself until her whole body was tense. With the faint pain which accompanies such incorporeal conjunctions, Geordie sensed that she was happy. For the first time he noticed that the pupils of her eyes were shadowed by several rings of gray.

Augusta had beckoned to Lord Holland, and he came down, peering near-sightedly, and frequently putting his hands in his pockets and taking them out again. They knew only one real resting-place; his desk in the City.

'Congratulate me," said A, "I sold Six Mile Bottom this morning á pite et á pot."

"Sold?"

"Quite satisfactorily," said Augusta, and lit a cigarette.

Holland swallowed his own Adam's apple. He

was a comical creature, who, in his office, would not have wasted another thought on a big stroke of business he had failed to bring off. But in private life he had speculated wildly on A's estate. Out here he was no longer the iron machine he was in the City, and for a few seconds he was shaken. But he was an old fighter. Much too soon to please Augusta, he forced a kind of a smile.

"Then you've had damned good luck. I am heartily glad. And now I hope you will stay with us for a while."

He no longer cared a rap who had bought the estate. There were so many idiots in the world. And Augusta in her joy looked amazingly pretty. She always did when she was lying. She made big baby eyes and pursed her lips.

"Unfortunately, not, Lord Holland. I only came over to take my brother to Six Mile Bottom."

"Impossible," protested Holland.

"Well," said Augusta. She carried through everything she wanted with such a mixture of childish idiocy and assurance that obstacles simply did not appear to exist for her.

That afternoon she was beside her brother in the carriage. She told him to whom each acre belonged. At last she pointed out a grassy path.

"We go that way," she said. "Be kind to my little house, Geordie."

7.

MY SISTER!

The following morning Geordie breakfasted beside Augusta's bed. The table with the breakfast stood between them. Despite the fact that she had to reach across it, A tried from time to time to put a piece of fruit into Geordie's mouth. It was seven o'clock and still very quiet in the fields. Through the windows could be seen the glitter of water in the wheel ruts on the way to Holland House. The trees were still wet and silvery with dew.

Geordie saw Augusta's sleeve fall back. Her brown arm appeared, and he felt with a sudden thrill of his whole being how deeply he loved A. It gripped him so terribly that he was afraid of losing his reason. She saw a shadowy expression pass over his face.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked tenderly.

"About you, Augusta. And that you are my sister."

She looked sharply at him for a moment. Then she took back the mulberry she was about to offer him, laid it on her plate and said quietly, "This is the second time you have spoken of that, Geordie. We did not even know one another as children. Moreover, we had different mothers. And I, at least, never saw my father, while you can hardly remember him. Am I right?"

"Of course you are right," said Geordie, and took the mulberry.

He had come up against something in Augusta which he had not expected. She simply did not think about her situation. Geordie trembled with surprise as if he had stumbled on a fortune which he must keep secret.

When they rode out later, A was fresh and gay. In the stable yard she mimicked the Hollands' major-domo. On the way Geordie had time to collect his thoughts. All this while he had not been able to get rid of the fear that Augusta might suddenly break down. Sometimes he had even imagined that she was cloaking something with her veiled manner. But now he saw that he had nothing to fear. It never dawned on Augusta that her passion for Geordie was anything frightful. And he? Well, he had sufficient spiritual freedom to take upon himself the breaking of an ancient blood law. It was not his fault. God only knew how he had got mixed up in it. And his understanding told him that the law, which he was breaking, was more one of prejudice than of infamy. He hardly thought of the law. He could calm himself, since A took everything so naturally.

Augusta rode ahead of him. Though she had borne several children, on horseback she looked like an eighteen-year-old girl. In her riding boots she was really boyish. She pulled up her horse and took a map out of her saddle bag. She found how the land lay and began to ride round the outskirts of the estate.

"That's rye," she said. "Prices are bound to rise, for more than thirty transports have been lost in the Bay of Biscay. Maize isn't profitable, though. I'm going to have that wood over there thinned out."

Augusta understood a great deal about farm man-

agement. It was comical to watch her consider each agricultural detail very carefully, judging the permanence of its effect.

When she talked about herself and Geordie she used exactly the ironically feeble-minded tone with which she imitated the coachman. But Geordie was madly in love with that, too.

"Pipin," he said, as they rode towards the pine wood, "I'm hungry."

"I think you're afraid of getting your white skin tanned," said A, turning her horse's head toward home. At least ten times a day she mentioned Geordie's white skin, which refused to get sunburnt. She always spoke in her absurd mocking way. But she did so as though by some powerful compulsion, and, as Geordie soon observed, she meant something quite different. Oddly enough it was precisely Geordie's mental way of speaking and acting that held her hypnotically fascinated. She said his skin, but she meant the often radiant impression which his nature made.

To A Geordie could talk as he could to Hobby. She did not go in for many gestures and she understood him. They often spoke of his work but exactly as they would have about the East India Company. He was as little extravagant as she. But she had delivered him, so that do or say what she might, he loved her down to the least detail with a depth of passion. A and her baby face would melt under Geordie's kisses. It was something new to both of them. But A loved her brother more when he was present in tangible form. Her imagination was not strong during absence. Geordie, on the other hand, was fairly beside himself whenever he did not see her for a short time.

On their return from the fields they did not say much to one another. After lunch Augusta sent for the children. "Don't be frivolous with them, Geordie," she said when their voices were heard, "they think of you as grown up."

When the new manager had familiarized himself sufficiently, there was nothing in the way of their going to Newstead Abbey. When they had been there a fortnight Geordie received a letter from Lady Melbourne.

A short time before, Lady Melbourne had introduced Caroline and the young Lord Proctor. She had suffered a real shock when the Proctor called on her a few days later and explained what it was all about. So Caroline had set him on Geordie's tracks. How could she have been so stupid as not to realize that Caroline must have something up her sleeve. She had imagined that the Proctor's rather extraordinary anatomy had attracted Caroline, but for a tiger like Lady Lamb that was naturally not enough.

"So it will probably end in a little duel," she said to the young man who towered head and shoulders over her. "Has it ever occurred to you that Geordie is enough of a shot to take off one of your fingers or your ear, just as he chooses?"

"Hardly, Lady Melbourne, I shouldn't have told you the joke if I had been caught in it."

Lady Melbourne went on uninterruptedly playing patience and at the same time flawlessly administering her tea table.

"Well, the business doesn't seem to have afforded you much pleasure," she said dryly.

Within she was raging. Had Caroline so little respect for her as to violate her friendships in this

way? Caroline dealt her a real blow by this intrigue. But she would see that Caroline was repaid.

She gathered her cards together. She had won that game.

"Will you see Lady Lamb?" the servant asked next morning. She nearly made a violent motion.

As Caroline entered Lady Melbourne rose in her dress of black sequins. A sleeveless evening gown so early? Caroline knew the moment her aunt rose what that meant. It was as though a whole invisible army corps had risen with the little woman. Caroline bent her head for an instant over her hand. When she looked up again, she had armed herself with a smile.

For a second they studied one another. Caroline's skin, Lady Melbourne noticed, was stretched a little tautly from the corners of her eyes to her temples. That always made her nose look rather sharp. She noticed a few other items that filled her with satisfaction.

"How are you, Caroline?" With her niece's hand in her arm she walked up and down the room with her twice.

"Splendid."

Lady Melbourne opened her fan. "Your skin is dry," she said by way of a feeler. "Excitement? never mind. But whatever gave you the idea of sending the Proctor into my house with a pistol?"

"It wasn't a pistol," said Caroline disdainfully. "But you shall get the answer you want directly you tell me who Geordie has at Newstead Abbey with him."

Lady Melbourne observed her niece's face with the closest attention. Her tone had been too sarcastic for her to know anything. But what did she suspect?

She realized at once that it was something very menacing to Geordie.

"Caroline," she said, grasping her niece firmly by the wrist, "let me tell you once and for all: You know I have a heap of letters which concern you, and which would be devilishly unpleasant for you. But I should not hesitate to let you drown in your bath if you and your intrigue do wrong to my friends."

She snapped her fan together and went out the door. Outside she realized that the conversation had exhausted her.

Three days later her butler announced Geordie, but she did not receive him as usual in the billiard room.

"How are you? You've changed your habits." Geordie looked fresh and healthy.

"Let us say rather, that I have been waiting for you for the last hour." He laughed so unaffectedly that she could not hit off the right irony.

"Have you so much on your mind?" Geordie drew off his gloves.

"A single question. Unfortunately, it is so delicate that I am afraid if you cannot answer, you will take your hat and go."

"One thing is certain, I could have answered it three times already."

He was disarming. Lady Melbourne possessed the singular charm of being able to chat rather aimlessly about everything, at the same time calling each spade a spade. But this time she could not get a certain name over her tongue.

"Is it she?" she asked, after a pause.

When Geordie nodded, she gazed up at the ceil-

ing for a moment, the only time that he ever saw her eyes fully open.

"Why didn't you tell me anything about it?"

Geordie remained silent.

"Of course, you could not talk about it," said Lady Melbourne resignedly. She was deeply hurt that he had not taken her into his confidence. But her friendship immediately scented the danger in which he stood. The childish security with which he looked at her, stirred her in such a way that she was immediately on his side again. She shut her eyelids so tightly that they hurt.

"I should never have thought it of her," said Lady Melbourne, "but one is always mistaken in the decisive things. Geordie, I hope no one knows about it. If anything is made public, you are lost. Can't you give her up? If you care for her at all, you will be caution itself." With every word she spoke it grew vividly clearer to her how great the danger was.

Geordie stood before her, smiling decorously, naive, but pale. "Well, have I taken my hat? You are dreadfully good, Lady Melbourne, but you exaggerate."

"Geordie," said Lady Melbourne with mild anger, "you forget the penal code." At that he changed color.

"Impossible that anyone should suspect us." But he was frightened at least.

"I will give you this advice," said Lady Melbourne as he went to the door, "keep as much out of Caroline's way as possible. Perhaps there are some people who suspect you. Every time that woman sees you she goes crazy. You haven't the faintest suspicion how one breaks with a woman of her type."

"Ah," she thought, "has he a suspicion of how one does anything in this world, at all?"

As Geordie drove back to Newstead Abbey he wondered whether anybody could know of the affair, and whether he could be sure nobody knew. With the exception of Clare he had certainly not hinted it to anyone. And that had been only very vague—it was that accursed time when he was sitting in Piccadilly, knowing that it was a life and death question, and yet believing that between A and him such a thing could never be.

The talk with Lady Melbourne had disturbed him. He determined to be as cautious as he possibly could. He had hardly ever thought of the penal laws. The problem of how A would react to her strange situation had occupied him quite completely and when he perceived that A was taking it as she would take the problem of learning to swim, his interest in it had vanished. Yes indeed, one accustomed one's self much more easily than one could have dreamt to a situation. A week earlier the only thing to do had seemed to be to put a bullet through one's brains. Looked at morally, it was the same thing. Certainly a few generations earlier no one within the pale of the Church could have survived it. Yet Geordie felt morally quite sound.

Probably Napoleon had seen nothing disturbing in his love for his sister Pauline. Lucretia Borgia had been remarkably open about her passion for her brother. And had not Francis the First scratched a much misunderstood line to his sister on the window at Chaumont: "Souvent femme varie et fol qui s'y fie?" Well, things had gone quite well with them all.

Actually one could make anybody blush by asking

how else, than by the marriage of near relations, human society had ever come into existence, according to the Creation. The whole problem of morality was only a mise en scene. There was nothing terrible about it, it was simply a foolish prejudice. Man had discarded this particular form of human propagation because, from a specifically scientific viewpoint, it was not good for the race.

Man was an exception to all other breeds of animals, which were the product of incest. Geordie thought of the Persian cat at Newstead who had again had kittens by her great-grandson. He concluded quite simply that, with animals, essentially the best was transmitted, but, with mankind, the result was very uncertain. Very often the horrible traits and fleshly weaknesses of ancestors suddenly re-appeared.

But the Pharaohs! For centuries, brother and sister had married, yet they were the noblest race in the world. All these things were quite clear, and worried Geordie very little.

No, what he suddenly feared, was not the God of his Aberdeen childhood, but the law. The law was powerful. In every critical instance, the law would be the more powerful. And that which threatened was, for Augusta, so terrible that he shut his eyes and the sweat stood out on his forehead.

He reached Newstead Abbey quite depressed and full of fears. As he entered the court he saw Augusta in riding breeches, on the window seat. Her broad white collar lay smooth against her black jacket. Her ears and her neck, with its fluting, were visible up to the fringe of short hair as she bent over and laughed down at him. She had parted her hair on the left side.

It was an easy matter for her to jump down from the high window. Her eyes were as cool and impenetrable as a wall. But they sparkled so that Geordie trembled.

"Miserable dog," she said, laying the palms of her hands over his ears, "I can see that you have not brought anything for me."

"A fishing rod," stammered Geordie distractedly. From his pocket he drew three large reels of colored silk with nickel fishes at the end. Augusta did not take them from him, instead she rubbed her nose against his cheek.

"Now you go wash yourself properly," she said, setting him free at last, and taking the fishing lines from his hand, "and then we will have tea. And, if you like, we can go for a short gallop this evening. I can't quite manage the Holstein. He keeps jumping to the left."

With a calmer feeling, Geordie went to his bath.

About six o'clock they went riding together. It was impossible they should be seen, and even if they were, why should his riding with his sister attract attention? Lady Melbourne had frightened him. Of course one must be careful, but women were always seeing ghosts.

"You must pull that beast in on the left rein," he said as she rode at his side along the edge of the wood. "And now stroke him with your left foot backwards and forwards. Right on the girth, and the shoulder forward! Spurs, and back in the saddle! There, you see, he has to do what you want."

"Oh yes. He's a nice creature. But very stupid." And she stroked the stupid horse gently across his mane with the reins. The sun was setting, a deep red over the fields, as they returned. A hawk rose

and on motionless wings circled above them. Twilight fell, the air was filled with a reddish haze, and in the distance rumbled heavily loaded harvest wagons. Before the sun had sunk, the moon was shining through the red glow of evening, kindling it to a new and more transparent brightness. Everywhere the birds began to stir again. Now and again a fox rustled through the undergrowth.

Geordie had to trot behind A as the path had become too narrow for them to ride side by side. He watched her distinct and supple silhouette, rising and falling softly and rhythmically in the saddle. They passed through some tall bushes, and when they trotted out into the open again, the calm was really impressive.

A halted for a moment before starting to gallop.

"Has something annoyed you?" she asked as they trotted slowly homeward across the paddock.

"Why do you imagine that?"

"I don't know. Are you tired?"

Her voice sounded quiet and confiding. It was silly of him to have let himself be worked up so. When he said, "No, A, nothing more than usual," he believed himself.

They halted for a moment by the brook. Over Newstead Abbey the velvety darkness rose and spread into a clear and starry sky.

"Let him jump to the left," said Geordie, making his mount rear and wheel, then leading both their horses back a few yards. "There's a good crossing over there, but it's all rather dark." A followed him, jumped left, and rode in silence after him into the stableyard.

A week later they were at Six Mile Bottom for the harvest, and soon afterwards Geordie went back to

London to hasten his law-suit. Every document was the subject for further inquiries; every order that had been given relative to the mine during the last century was scrutinized by the other side, all in order to gain time. And it was urgently necessary to block these thievish plans by securing the profits in England. All of which took infinite time and still more infinite patience.

The opposite party had determined upon a clear and flagrant breach of the law. The mines should never have been sold. But as they were in possession of them and declared they had made a bona fide purchase, though they were as much thieves in Rochdale as they would have been had they broken into St. James' Palace, they could not be thrown out until this moral point had been cleared up, and their profits compared with the legal owner's losses, and the purchase price reckoned with. All in all, it was a law-suit in which Geordie's position was as clear as daylight. But Geordie acknowledged, when he had considered his opponents' tactics, that there is nothing easier to run than a legal quarrel in which one does not really believe in one's own cause.

Actually these people simply did not have the ghost of a right in the business. Yet that they were living on his fortune against all written law, and simply could not be got rid of, he understood clearly enough, though his sense of justice rebelled at it. "An infamous band of robbers," he thought as he left his lawyer's office.

A few weeks later he met A at Holland House. But later still, when Augusta came to London to help her princess get through a court ball, Geordie was down in the country.

They first saw one another again at Six Mile Bot-

tom, just before Christmas. Snow lay on the roads to the woods. The wagon ruts were frozen when they went over one afternoon to call at Holland House. The yew hedge was drifted white, and the greyhounds, with columns of steam rising from their pointed, intelligent heads, raced round and round in the drive.

Most of February Geordie spent in Cambridge with Hobby, while A went through part of the London season. There was a certain amount of stage in the way they avoided one another, but Geordie managed the chassez-croisez casually enough to prevent A's realizing that it was being arranged. That was quite easy, for Augusta Leigh was almost annoyingly incurious.

When Geordie visited Six Mile Bottom in March, the buds were beginning to burst. The birds sang over the fields, and there was a great deal of silent but busy movement in the branches. Every now and again a fat chestnut bud would burst. It grew warm early that year. The almonds stood in puddles of snow, their early blossoms covered thick with swarms of bees.

Geordie came through the park with A who, as usual, walked a few paces apart from him. He could see the little fluting in her neck, running down from her fringe of hair. In her hand she carried a glove and a bouquet of violets. With the sun flashing round her, she looked charmingly supple as, warm with walking and stooping, she strode beside him.

"Have you had an invitation from Lord Connaught?" asked Geordie, when they had reached the verandah. "They are hunting. Next week, I think. He's Miss Cunard's brother, isn't he?"

Augusta went into the sitting room. "No, I'm not going, Geordie," she said. "I don't care to give Miss Cunard an opportunity of cutting me."

"Miss Cunard cuts you?" asked Geordie in astonishment. She was a trusted friend of Augusta's. "What reason can she have for doing that?" A, with her hands cupped, went on arranging her flowers in a vase, and shrugged her shoulders.

"Some turf business of Leigh's?"

"Probably."

Geordie gazed at the chandelier. He felt uncomfortable. Nobody could possibly be more careful than he. Through Fletcher he got exact information on all Caroline Lamb's movements and plans. Moreover, he thought that by being so much in the country he had diverted attention from himself. He did not stop to consider that a young man, with his place in society, is only unobserved when he is directly in the limelight. Neither did he stop to realize that the change in his habits was also attracting attention, and that everyone knew a different reason for the change. He merely thought how careful he was. And then, might not Leigh be to blame? He had been making one thrust after another lately!

It was arranged that A should meet him in London the following week, then they would go down to Newstead together.

The next morning Geordie went to London, and from there to Newstead Abbey to see that everything was in order for the spring. Then he rushed back to London to meet A.

As he walked through Hyde Park one evening, he heard someone call his name. That voice would have electrified him in Hell. A drove up beside him

in one of her Princess' carriages, and invited him to get in with her. He could not very well tell her that that was just the thing he wanted to avoid. He jumped in and, under the rug, clasped her hand. Shortly afterwards they got into a jam of vehicles, blocking the gate.

"I will get out here. Tomorrow at eight. Where are you going now?"

A held up a small parcel on the palm of her hand. "To Chichester. But you can't get out here, Geordie, we're wedged in. At least, wait until we're out of the Park."

Shortly afterwards the jam thinned a little. They moved a few paces forward, only to stop again beside another carriage which was also open. Geordie saw A squinting over at it. Suddenly he noticed Augusta blush and deliberately look away from the carriage. He glanced across. In it sat the Duchess of Devonshire with Lady Chichester. Noticing his glance, A said, "See, they were just talking scandal about me."

She waved her left hand in an effort to relieve the embarrassment with which they had avoided meeting her glance. Lady Chichester was a step-sister of Augusta's, by her mother's first marriage, yet, strangely enough, the two women did not notice A's salute, and, as the crowd of carriages was thinning, they drove on and disappeared without returning her wave.

"I am afraid," said Augusta, tears of fury in her gray eyes, "that that was on your account, Geordie." They were just driving close to the curb, and she took the package and threw it with all her might into the bushes.

"Of course," said Geordie, laughing through his teeth. Shortly afterwards he got out.

He walked home. How foolish to have met like that! Of course, he must let Augusta continue to believe that he was the cause of the incident. Perhaps he was. The Duchess was an old hen, stone deaf, and certainly thought him the Devil himself. And Lady Chichester? Wasn't she somehow related to the old woman, and hoping to get something from her? In any case she would never have had enough courage to acknowledge a person the Duchess had just insulted. She must have been shouting in the Duchess of Devonshire's deaf ear, and obviously A had heard something. Nobody ever behaved more ridiculously than a woman caught in the act, particularly if it was another woman who caught her. All very probable! But something told him he was simply throwing dust in his own eyes.

More and more people had been cutting him of late. Pipin! His heart contracted. She must not suffer. But how could he stop it? One word, one casually spoken word of suspicion, was sufficient to fix attention on them both. And besides, he, Geordie, was not a man concerning whom public opinion would indignantly repudiate any rumor. No, he had to admit that with the enemies he had made, he was far more the man about whom this and everything else would be believed. He stared for a while at his front door before letting himself in.

To his astonishment he dozed off quickly and slept well. Fletcher woke him at seven and by eight he was in his carriage.

The nearer he and A drew to Newstead Abbey, the less he thought of the previous evening's inci-

dent. There was no sense in such thoughts. What evidence had he for his conjectures? And who was likely to supply him any there in the country where they hardly ever saw anybody? He thought of Newstead Abbey as a good hiding place, as he had always thought of it since his childhood. And he looked with affection at the old walls as he drove in.

Summer seemed to have arrived in April, it was so hot. From his writing table Geordie could look across the lake to the tower. He had a whole raft of plans. Accounts and leases were piled up on his table.

When he looked up from them to stare at the sky, he thought of A and felt a joyful throbbing in his breast. He could see a thin line beside the tower. That was her fishing rod. Augusta had thrown herself into the new sport with the zeal that all young women have for new passions, and in the last two days had read three books on the subject, of which one was called, "The Art of Using Artificial Flies," and another "Good Fishing Lines." Both were intended primarily for salmon fishers in Norway.

Pipin lay flat on her belly beneath her rod and watched the greedy roaches flirt with her earthworm bait. Every time that her rod bent, described a circle and flashed like a streak through the sunshine, it meant that her wiles had triumphed over the natural discretion of a white-fish. That was probably what attracted her to the whole business. God knows, Augusta was not fastidious. Didn't the puny little white-fish always bite sooner or later anyhow? All one needed was patience. For real hunting she had very little inclination. That was why she always threw the fish into the water again.

Perhaps he ought to give her the opportunity to fish a trout stream. Or should he write Hobby? That was not a bad idea. He came of a fishing family. Of course, his arrival would disturb the intimacy of their life together, but then Hobby—it was a delicate question. Hobby at least was safe.

Also, it might not have a bad effect on the world outside. Gradually Geordie began to wish to see Hobby there again. He laid aside his papers, and walked through the park. A, who had her back to him, did not hear his footsteps on the grass.

"Twelve," he said, peering into the pail, "that's a record."

Augusta turned slightly. She had propped her chin in her left hand, and with the other held the rod, while she kept staring into the water.

"Murray was just here," she replied. "He said twelve roaches mean rain. Do you know that Mary Chaworth has arrived at Annesley. She has finally got a divorce."

Geordie gazed, puzzled, at A's neck. It shone in the warm spring like bronze.

"Do you want to drive over?" he asked quietly.

"I?"

"Well, just what did you mean?"

"I want to give you a chance," she said coldly.

Geordie scrutinized attentively the bit of profile which was all he could see of her face. A had never shown a sign of jealousy. This behavior was new. Why was she raking up that old childhood story? Was a crisis looming?

"That chance," he answered unconcernedly, "I botched ten years ago. What do you say, A, shall I write and ask Hobby to come here for the fishing?

His family contains most of the fishing fiends in Scotland."

"As you please, Geordie. Was Mary pretty?"

"I really remember only her voice. It was almost like yours."

"Ah," said Augusta, and turned round, but without quite losing sight of her line. The fish, which was swimming excitedly round the bait, could not resist temptation much longer.

Geordie noticed that a lock of her hair had fallen over one eyebrow and was hiding the lid. Augusta jealous? He lost his composure.

"Yes, it is strange," he went on, gazing thoughtfully across the plain where the air quivered above the grass, "everything which once attracted me in various women, was suddenly all there together in you. Before I knew you, I loved you in bits."

Augusta stood up. She looked suddenly pale and had red spots on her cheeks.

"I must tell you something, Geordie. There's no longer any doubt that I am going to have a child." She saw how his glance fell and wavered. "I am sure it is Leigh's," she added, making a rapid calculation.

"Are you sure?" asked Geordie. "Oh, A!" He laid his hands on her shoulders. She noticed as he put his face down in one hand that he was trembling. "It can't be Leigh's."

Augusta considered the whole thing in a flash. "Two months ago, when you were at Cambridge, he was at Six Mile Bottom." Her instinct told her that she must, under all circumstances, lie. But why? That she did not know.

When Geordie looked at her, he knew she was lying. A stared at the ground. She noticed that

her rod was moving and flicked the line out of the water. As she freed the fish she knew positively that she had acted correctly. She threw the fish into the pail. "Thirteen! That means luck. Better than rain." She lifted the pail and, with all her might, threw its contents back into the pond.

"I'll write to Hobhouse this evening," said Geordie, watching distractedly as she took her rod to pieces and put it away in a leather case.

"Trout?"

Augusta thought of certain passages in "The Art of Using Artificial Flies," and grew interested.

"No one would ever know from her expression what is in her mind," thought Geordie. Was it concealment? Or was the question which had only just begun to trouble him, already answered for her?

"Shall I carry the case?"

She hesitated. "If you like. Have you a cigarette?"

Geordie carried the case and the pail, and A held the can with the worms, in her hand. They walked through the park among the trees. As they reached the edge of the wood, Geordie stopped and, without putting down the things he was carrying, sought A's lips. She returned his kiss, without moving her arms. It shot through them both. They had never before kissed like that.

"I say," said Geordie, "there's Murray!" He pointed to the old man who was just passing in front of the house. Without another word they left the shelter of the trees and strolled across.

Geordie remained at the door after A had gone in. There was not a motion in the ancient trees. Yet there was suddenly a cooler and deeper light around

the freshly budding branches. Evening falls quickly in April.

"The child," thought Geordie, "will always be Leigh's child." Leigh's child? He had let slip the moment for discussing it with Augusta. After that kiss, a new and deep-rooted community of feeling had awakened between them. Was the child so important to him after all? No. But A!—A? He felt his heart throb hotly and painfully with longing for her. And from the darkening air he breathed in hungrily the smell of the fresh earth, in which there was still a scent of cherry blossoms, and went slowly into the house.

8.

A NEW TURN OF EVENTS

THERE comes a time when men can respect one another's secrets only if they are at liberty to discuss them freely. So it was with Hobhouse.

When he had been a week at Newstead Abbey he had made so many observations that even his art of dissembling had reached its limit. Added to this were all the rumors he had heard before he came, while he saw clearly that Geordie was struggling to reach some kind of a decision. Only that morning he had watched him tear up a couple of letters, and had thought his own thoughts about that.

He decided to leave Newstead unless Geordie gave him the opportunity to talk as a friend. It was impossible for him to broach the subject himself. It would have meant putting himself on a level with the people who sent Geordie anonymous letters. He had noticed the shudder of repugnance with which Geordie had flung the letters away. Hobby had had his experiences. Geordie, with his anonymous letters, must have still more. But since Geordie had not passed them over with contempt, they must have worked like iodine in an open wound. Well, tomorrow or the day after Hobby would leave, if he could not induce Geordie to speak. The boy was going to smash and was certainly imagining the queerest things.

Hobhouse went into the garden where the lilac was already in flower. It was an unusually early summer. There would probably be more frost. But

the fragrance was glorious. He snuffed the soft air again. Crickets out in the pastures. A distant dog. Farther away a nightingale began. And then another in the park. A gong sounded and Hobhouse went slowly indoors to dinner.

He saw Geordie pacing up and down the dining room, and he stopped for a moment to watch a shooting star. At this season? Amazing. As he turned and went into the corridor he saw Geordie on the stairs, holding Augusta in his arms. Her head had fallen back and her eyes were closed. Involuntarily he stood still.

"You must not ride any more," said Geordie, stroking Augusta's forehead. He held his sister as though she were made of glass. Hobhouse could never forget the look of concern on Geordie's face. He felt a wild pain at his heart as he saw that look. "God!" he thought, "what has Geordie got into?"

The next instant Geordie noticed him.

"Has something happened, old Baron?"

"Help me lay her on the divan." It was hard for him to manage it alone because of his foot.

Augusta Leigh opened her eyes as Hobhouse put his arm under her knees and lifted her up. "I shall be quite all right in a moment," she said, with an attempt at a smile. "Then I shall go upstairs alone."

"Augusta, you are overtiring yourself. You fell down the stairs."

A ran her hand through his hair. "A little giddiness. I've had it three times before. The first time I rode until almost the end."

Geordie helped her upstairs.

"I'm not hungry," she said when she finally agreed to take his arm. Hobhouse heard her door close. Then Geordie came back.

"Sorry," he said, shortly, "you won't mind if we dine alone?"

"No," replied Hobhouse. "I'm leaving in the morning, Geordie."

Geordie glanced up surprised. "Already? Are you bored?"

"No, Geordie. On the contrary."

"You found the trout fishing good no longer ago than yesterday," said Geordie bitterly. He looked distrustfully at Hobhouse. "Have you heard something?"

"You could certainly have avoided that, Geordie."

Hobby was hurt. Geordie felt it. He thought of Hobby as he had first seen him, standing by the window at Cambridge—sunburned, his blonde hair brushed straight back. With a sudden warmth he felt that here was the one man he could trust. But help him?—even Hobby could not do that. Where did people get their information, anyhow? This was the second time today that somebody had insinuated things about A and him. For a week Geordie had seen the scandal looming nearer, and had thought over and over again, what he should do. His outraged feelings urged him to single out one of the scandal-mongers and bring action against him. His common sense advised him just as strongly against it.

Suppose, in event of an accusation, that A had to appear as a witness and give evidence on oath? Any lawsuit contained that hidden snag. The creatures knew why it was better to venture only veiled insinuations. If he should take action against them—but it was not to be thought of while Augusta was in England.

For that very reason he had thought only that

afternoon of abandoning the field. He would simply take A abroad with him. But by doing so he would admit what people suspected. Yet he would avoid both lawsuit and scandal. No one could bring an action against him abroad. And here—here let them gossip, it was all one to him; he would give up England. Suppose they outlawed him! He would pack in that chance with the rest of his luggage. There was nothing for him in this crowd anyway—in Italy he would live with A, wherever and however he pleased. But there was a catch in this, too! A's children! And Leigh!

Hobhouse glanced sharply at Geordie's tortured face. The moment had come!

"I say, Geordie," he said, laying his knife carefully straight across his plate, "wouldn't you like to go for another little journey? Italy or somewhere?"

Geordie stared into Hobhouse's eyes until he could no longer see their pupils. He knew at once what that meant. Hobby knew, understood, and wanted to save him. Wanted him to make an end, to leave Augusta.

"I want you to understand, Hobby," he said softly, "I can't get away. Things are much worse with me than you imagine. For the first time." He laid his hand on his heart.

When Geordie said that, Hobby felt as though he had fallen from a window into the garden.

"Have you any prejudices?" asked Geordie, who had not missed Hobby's shudder. Hobby made a gesture of denial.

"What are you thinking of doing?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"But you must do something."

"Why?"

"Because you are in danger of spending three years in jail."

A pause ensued during which Geordie buried his face in his hands. Then he took his elbows from the table. Hobby saw that he had scored a point at last. Geordie sat up.

"Yes, Hob. The scandal is getting hotter. I decided this afternoon to go abroad with A."

"It certainly is a rule of war that one should avoid a hopeless fight," said Hobhouse angrily. "Parry a blow—that is all right. But to provoke a scandal yourself—to flee abroad with Augusta. You can't do that, Geordie. That would be too horribly cowardly."

Geordie blenched.

"Sooner or later—the crash will come here, in any case. It is better. . . ." he broke off, upset by Hobby's insult.

Hobby realized that he must approach things in a different way.

"Geordie, it is by no means certain that a scandal will break on you. Nobody is going to make an open accusation lightly. You know the penalties for libel. I should like to see who would ever risk his neck for it. For tactical reasons you must wait —or you must break with Augusta."

"Be quiet, Hob." Geordie's eyes narrowed. They were tiny points of horror.

"Very well, if you can't do that, you must at least grant her the one chance that will spare her."

"What do you mean by that?"

Though Hobby was deeply shaken by Geordie's voice, he rose and said, "That it would be better for you to shoot Augusta Leigh than to expose her

to the scandal which will follow if you leave England with her."

Geordie was clasping his neck with his left hand.

"Then I must go on living in dread that some day the whole business will break. It is not for myself, Hob," he said quietly. "It is simply because Augusta has no suspicion of anything. You don't know how naive she is. She has simply no idea of the real situation, no idea of lawsuits or jails."

"Then it seems to me," said Hobby, his eyelids twitching, "that the manly thing to do, is as I say. You are no fool."

Suddenly, the tension made him laugh.

Geordie got up. Hobhouse's laughter started some sort of relaxation in him. A wave of tranquillity passed over him. That had been his own point of view all the time. But it was good to hear it from Hobby. Of course he must not let himself be provoked! They went out on to the terrace. Another shooting star fell. It fell exactly as the first had done, between two poplars, as though it were going to plunge into the lake. They walked a little further. A wave of heavy scent from the lilacs came to them through the tall hedges of the yew walk. Behind the woods there was a short, vivid flash.

"April—and thunderstorms already," Hobby breathed in the sweet air deeply.

"I think you are right, Hob, about remaining here. Augusta must not be flung to the hounds. I've really thought so all along. But this morning I received a letter . . ."

"Of course, my dear fellow, you didn't choose the position you're in now, and I can quite understand that you would like to get free of it at one blow. But that is impossible. We must be cool-

headed now, Geordie. You must not overestimate this business of a scandal. Let the creatures come out with their accusations. There will always be time to hit back. But now,—" Hobby laid his hand on Geordie's shoulder, "—now that your sister is expecting a child, she should be where she belongs, with her husband. With Leigh. At least in her own house. I will say a few words to her about it. And you—what about traveling a bit? Italy? I think it could be done."

"I can't go away for the present, Hob. But for the rest,—well, it can be arranged," said Geordie, and he felt as though the heavens and the fragrance of the lilacs had tumbled to the ground at his feet.

Hobhouse lifted his hand from Geordie's shoulder and let it drop back again. Then he went indoors to smoke a cigar.

Geordie's gaze followed him, and then traveled over the house to the upstairs windows. Augusta's light was still burning. What would happen next? Were they to give in still further—see one another still less often? Wait still more feverishly? His heart throbbed jerkily and painfully. A deep sweetness like that of lilac clusters spread tremulously through his veins. If Augusta were spared, nothing else mattered to him. He thought over carefully all that he could do for her. He felt, without blenching, that there were no limits to which he would not go. How many men had been in his position? And did they all think, as Hobby and he thought, that the manliest thing, was simply to bide one's time and await events? Surely not.

But Hobby was right. Everything hinged on the outcome of the whole situation. Yes, by God, that was right. But it was easier to say than to carry

through. Geordie broke a branch from a bush and tore a leaf to pieces with his teeth.

His was a nature all too capable of accurately gauging facts, for the contradiction between his actual situation, and the concessions he was making to it, not to be obvious to him. His was a nature, moreover, which retreated very unwillingly, but still more unwillingly exposed itself.

And what was causing him to retreat? A statute that had not been made for A and him. A statute that had been framed to protect the race. But what had the English race to fear from him and A, and what did the nation care, after all, if he loved A and A loved him? This was not being frivolous. God knows he did not mean it cynically. He threw the branch away and lit a cigarette. The very people who would accuse him, hardly knew of what—were simply parroting a law. As though religion itself were not based on just such actions. Idiots!

Had he, Geordie, prayed to be swept away by this passion? Had he not striven against it? No, he was certainly no seeker after sensation in love. Every time he wanted to fall in love things had gone wrong—Mary Chaworth, Bobby, Caroline—never once had he been really deeply stirred.

He remembered, on the other hand, with what passion he had desired Augusta. If that desire had not been pure, then there was nothing decent in this world. If the world did not want this union, well, what business was it of the world's? And if Providence did not want it, why had Providence got him into this entanglement? Why had Providence led A and him into danger and driven them to transgress the law? On that score, God knows,

no one had any right to accuse him. He dismissed the idea.

Quite the opposite—he, Geordie, had reason to accuse Providence. And pacing up and down between the hedges, with their heavy lilac scent, he did it thoroughly. But he was not the man to protest for long. It was time for action. Time to expose himself. Time to oppose the scandal step by step. To build up a shield for Augusta. But—but, what was still to come?

He stopped, in surprise. Augusta's light was out. She was asleep. Again he was so powerfully conscious of his passion for her that he had to stand quite still for a while, in order not to choke in the sultry air among the bushes.

9.

VOLTE

Sitting in his carriage, Hobhouse asked himself if his life was really so uninteresting. Nobody thought of questioning him, "Whence? whither?" His best friends no longer knew.

At the same time he did not hide himself at all. He was much better known as a sportsman than Geordie. He had recently published a small book on his travels in the Orient, which for sharpness of insight and ripeness of expression was not beaten by Tacitus. He knew more people than any one of his acquaintances. Yet attention was never focussed on him. It was as though his air of discretion shielded him directly from every glance.

Hobhouse reflected that he might call all the people at court a band of scoundrels, without receiving more than an absent-minded smile. Hobby the popular! The witty sportsman! Hobhouse, the character, the friend, the pattern of the true gentleman.

He smiled when he thought of all he had been through in the last five years.

So it was: he had to look after his friends in their troubles, no doubt because trouble passed him by. With a somewhat mordant amusement he observed how the slightest complication in the affairs of other people racked their whole cosmos. And how they shouted, and how sure each was of being the center of all interest! A comical world!

And Hobby, who was convinced that he could

forge a note without any one's believing it, ordered his carriage to stop so that he might run for a stretch in the grass by the roadside. He had taken off his coat, his chin was drawn in a little, his neck stretched like that of a racehorse, and he alternately thrust forward one shoulder and then the other, as if he were charging at a gallop—and ran five hundred yards.

He was coming from Six Mile Bottom, and had passed through Newmarket. Ideas like that of taking a good run occurred spontaneously there. It was ideal running country. It bordered right on Leigh's estate.

At bottom he was not certain whether he liked Augusta or not. But she was a good pal already. It was splendid the way she took everything. And for Geordie's sake, naturally, he must be on her side.

Even at Newstead Abbey it had proved necessary to tell Augusta that she must be careful. Unpleasantnesses had occurred not merely because Geordie or Leigh had trod on people's feelings here and there, but because a type like Geordie was always distrusted —and it would be better even for his sister not to be seen about with him too much.

It was obvious; for one whole season Geordie had been seen only in society, and then always with Caroline Lamb, and suddenly he had changed his whole manner of living and was always traveling into the country with his sister. Ridiculously little to be questioned in that. But people were now constantly on the lookout for something. And they always found what they were looking for. There was no sense discussing the matter, but one must observe and act accordingly. It was only a tip.

A thanked Hobby, laughed and gave him her

hand. One could never tell what was in her mind. What was she thinking? Was she amusing herself with the whole lot of them? Or was there really some compound of naivete and cleverness called Augusta Leigh—who always managed to stop thinking at the point where other people began to have misgivings? The sureness of a somnambulist plus great charm.

Hobby had just been having tea with her. He dropped in sometimes because Geordie went there less frequently now. Generally he appeared with some of the family or a large group. A and he spoke little but quite freely together. Obviously Augusta had understood Hobby's tip, but she never referred to it. And if she was sometimes sad, she had acquired of late a rougish manner that cloaked it charmingly. Her conversation was constantly full of double-meanings. So it really troubled no one if she acted like a Madonna who had burnt her tongue.

She was proud that no one noticed her pregnancy. She carried her child so easily that she was able to ride right up to the end. She really never lost her figure. "Where on earth does she carry it?" Hobby wondered. Only her face seemed to have broadened a little across the cheekbones.

When Hobby reached home he found an envelope whose contents accompanied him when he went to see Geordie. There was something about Fletcher's glance that struck Hobhouse.

"Really," he thought, "in time I'll turn into a real bird of ill omen." Something nearly always happened when Hobhouse appeared. Not always immediately, Fletcher had observed; but his master would go away suddenly, or, if he had ordered the

carriage, he cancelled it. Or his manner changed completely to one whose consequences Fletcher, who remembered young Geordie from the days of his "instrument," well knew how to forecast.

As Geordie looked up, Hobhouse noticed in his face a tension which moved him. That head, with its scintillating, witty arrogance, its cold, white, manly beauty, its disdainful and yet glowing eyes, sometimes had an expression of resignation which was tragic.

"Hallo, how goes it Hobby?"

"Tip-top. Much love."

"God knows you are a good chap, Hobby. Have a whisky? Is A still riding?"

"I have no inclination to play the spy. Besides, A's a splendid fellow. Have you seen this?" Hobhouse drew a blue booklet from the envelope. Geordie shook his head.

"There are thirty-seven of those booklets in London at present. Were it not for the natural principle of human freedom, a decent man could have no sweeter knowledge than that the author of this thing was breaking rocks in New Zealand."

Geordie turned over a page. "Caroline," he said. "There are certain expressions. . . ."

"Of course," said Hobhouse sarcastically.

"Well?"

"I observe that it is a kind of inventory of your affairs, with really entertaining details. Aren't you struck by anything?"

"It's absurdly pathetic."

"What a pity you never became a critic. The level of English literary taste would have been much raised," said Hobby. "Don't you see that it is an excerpt from a book?"

Geordie grew more attentive, and began to read it again. "You mean," he said uneasily, "that I'm to be hit in other places later?"

"I don't think she's so stupid as to put her own head in the noose. But I'll drop in and see Lady Melbourne."

"Come with me," said Geordie, after a moment's reflection. "I must go there anyway, and afterwards we can have tea together."

"I'm sorry, but I can't," said Hobhouse. "But you might drop in and have dinner with me."

Geordie went straight to Lady Melbourne. On the way it struck him that he might take her some flowers. But he forgot it again.

"Say on urgent business," he told the butler.

Lady Melbourne, who was playing a billiard match, came at once. Without having seen Geordie, she knew that he had not come to play billiards. The tea things followed her, though she had entered holding her cue under her arm, like a rifle pointing downward.

"I've only dropped in for a second," said Geordie quickly, glancing behind him.

"Oh!" Lady Melbourne passed him a cup of tea. Geordie looked calm. It could not be anything very unpleasant.

"Listen," he said, laying the hand with the tea on the arm of his chair. "I've just heard that Caroline is publishing a sort of novel. It is my opinion that in her present condition, Augusta Leigh should be spared all annoyances."

"Do you know anything definite?"

"Only this." Geordie handed her the booklet.

Lady Melbourne blinked as she read it. "It isn't bad." She got a certain pleasure from reading the

chapter, for she now saw pretty clearly what had changed Caroline. "She has imagined a wonderful rôle for herself."

Geordie laughed.

"I will call on her presently," said Lady Melbourne, and rose.

"You might tell her that my grandfather, Small, left a lady who had insulted his mother, naked in Hyde Park one morning."

"I certainly shall not," said Lady Melbourne, who knew a better theme for a serious talk with Caroline. "You may come to lunch tomorrow. Will you send Hobhouse to me in the morning?" she said as Geordie left.

The next morning Hobhouse, somewhat bewildered, gave the butler his card. "Ask if there is not some mistake about Lady Melbourne's wishing to see me?"

"No, there is no mistake," said the hollow-cheeked butler politely. "Lady Melbourne is expecting you, Mr. Hobhouse."

"Sit down," said Lady Melbourne, motioning him towards the hearth as he was shown into her boudoir. She remained standing.

"I have settled everything," she said at once. "The subject which occasioned Geordie's visit yesterday, will positively not be mentioned in the book in question. I read the book last night. It is foolish. Unfortunately it's not bad. Now, may I ask you something?"

"I fancy that is why I am here," replied Hobhouse politely.

"Do you believe it is possible to separate Geordie from his—from this affair?"

Hobhouse smiled wanly up at her.

"I thought so too," said Lady Melbourne, and sat down. She stared at Hobby's long, narrow feet,

"Would you dissuade Geordie, if the suggestion arose that he should marry, let us say—somebody or other?"

"Why do you ask?" Hobhouse slung one leg over the other in his surprise.

"I want to shield myself from having to read in the papers of his arrest."

"He would laugh at you." Hobhouse had risen and was standing with his back to the fire.

"I did not ask you that, Mr. Hobhouse, but if you would persuade him to it?"

Then Hobhouse understood what she intended. She wanted to let the rumors die out. Augusta would be with her husband on their estate. As far as the world was concerned Geordie would be married. He nodded.

"Is it in order?"

"I think it is."

"That was what I wanted to know. Thank you, sir. You are the one man in Geordie's set with whom I can talk. That was why I asked you to come here, though I know you do not bear me any special sympathy. Oh, it doesn't matter at all," she added ironically, as Hobby contradicted. "But you are mistaken in thinking that Geordie will oppose this business. He will think it over as he thinks over his fortune. He has lost his law-suit for the Rochdale mine, and now he's going to start another. All young people, if they have lived fully, have moments when they look longingly at marriage. Not all Englishmen are bachelors, sir. And will that change the whole situation for Geordie? I am afraid not. But when he sees that marriage will

improve the situation for him, he will be just as willing to marry today as tomorrow. Do have some more tea?"

"Thank you, no. And whom have you hit on?" said Hobby.

"Frankly, no one as yet. I wanted to speak to you first. You might think it over."

"I?"

"Of course, sir. It is *you* who will have to suggest it to him."

Hobhouse was horrified by this demand, but he shot an astonished glance from under his eyelids at Lady Melbourne. He felt her house uncongenial, yet she herself impressed him.

"May I come again?" he asked at the door.

"Do nothing against the grain," said Lady Melbourne. "It has never yet graced any one."

She had a charming way of saying good-bye, without smiling, simply by screwing up her eyes.

"What a pity she isn't a man," thought Hobhouse, as the hollow-cheeked butler closed the door behind him. This woman's spirit was something that he missed more and more in men. A go-ahead temperament and a capacity for friendship. Real kindliness in her somewhere, too. And devilishly clever. Yet those were characteristics he did not approve in women. About the characteristics women ought to have, Hobhouse had his own opinion, which nobody knew. But that did not trouble Hobby in the least.

To his amazement, when he came to suggest the marriage project to Geordie a little later, he found that he was not even surprised.

"I've thought about it myself, Hobhouse," he said, staring with his eyes, which were sometimes steel-

gray, at his visitor, who was perching on the edge of the table.

"I was afraid you would laugh," murmured Hob.

"Why no. I often consider what could be helpful to us. Naturally that idea also occurred to me. I am simply wondering whether, under the circumstances, such an—undertaking would appear more or less favorably."

"So Lady Melbourne was right," thought Hobby. He would not need to bother any further about the business than the writing of some such letter as: "Dear Lady Melbourne. Geordie has surprised us. He has even anticipated our idea. It might be best not to speak further with him on the subject, or his Scotch obstinancy may drive him to do the exact opposite."

"Well, it was only a tip. Good luck to it," he said as he went away, trying to look as if his suggestion had been made on the spur of the moment.

Since their conversation before the thunderstorm at Newstead Abbey, Geordie had seemed to him to be on the right path. But it was a wild business. God help the boy. He was always riding needlessly into some hail of fire. Ah well, that was his destiny. But one could make life much easier and more entertaining.

After Hobhouse had left, Geordie began to ponder again on the idea which had now been given a slight impetus. Things really could not go on as they were. To have A and yet not to have her. Scarcely to be able to see his own sister, though she lived only a few miles from London. And then the child. It was intolerable.

They had begun to correspond. That set things still more awry. Augusta, with her baby intelligence,

wrote charming letters, clever as only a woman's letters can be, yet buried under the sheerest idiotic nonsense. She had invented a sort of code. The most remote, as well as the most intimate, things were duly treated to symbolic circumlocution, transcribed as crosses, blots, exclamation points and circles. She wrote about "pistol shots" and "bells which ring."

From these letters, with their unimpeachable ambiguity, Geordie recognized that one could never possess Augusta as fully as one loved her. Something about her, like the expression in her eyes, whose lids never appeared to close completely over their gray stars, remained unfathomable. But it seemed to him that was, perhaps, the most adorable thing about her.

As time went on, the more he thought about the marriage project, the more ground he found for thinking that the undertaking might prove more favorable for him than otherwise.

It was obvious that, on one side, marriage would erect a certain barrier against all attacks. He would like to see who, once he was married to a beautiful woman of the right social standing, would care to risk imprisonment for the sake of an old scandal. And since Augusta had taken care to make known her pregnancy at a time when Leigh was at Six Mile Bottom, the plan was really very practical.

His one thought was of Augusta, and how he could inform her of the project without rousing her suspicions. As to how to introduce his future wife, whose identity was still unknown to him, and how to bring her into this game of combinations, he did not think for a moment.

As he drove out to A he was afraid he could not find sufficient reasons to make the project appear

logical to her. And he would rather give it up than shock her. But as he drove into Six Mile Bottom, that seemed absurd to him, and he determined to speak to her at all costs. If he could not put through the project, well then, he could not. It seemed to him as he watched the greyhounds tearing down to meet him, that he could not.

A came out to the carriage. "Hardly any change," he thought. His heart contracted as always when he saw her. Every time that she gave him her hand, after a short interval when they had not seen one another, he was unconscious for a few moments. His brain no longer functioned; he felt only her brave, clever, warm hand.

"Wonderful A! How well you carry it. It's the fifth month already, isn't it? Don't you ride either?"

"I shouldn't ever ask people questions that they have to answer with a lie. I don't like having to lie."

He laughed softly. "I'd like to ride with you later, A,—but it wouldn't do."

"You are an idiot, Geordie," she said, leading the way into the hall. "You shut your eyes to the things you don't want to see, but if it suited you, I'd ride on the left and you on the right—only neither of us must see the other."

"That isn't so, A," said Geordie, standing by the door of his room and turning the handle. "I should only suffer needlessly if I thought you were doing yourself harm. Perhaps I love you too much, A. What would you say if I were to marry?"

He said it with such emphasis, and with so pained an expression, that A did not laugh as loudly as she had intended.

"Your bath is ready," she said. "We can talk about your marriage later."

Augusta had also had time to reflect on various items in their relationship which were not as happily contrived as they might be; perhaps she recalled some of the tips Hobby had given her at Newstead —one never could tell from moment to moment what she would fish out of her subconsciousness, in arriving at some decision. At any rate, when Geordie began to speak of the project after lunch, she took it with a certain seriousness, even though with obvious irony for the reason he adduced—the lawsuit over the Rochdale mine.

The project in no way implied any diminishing of their relationship; neither, on the other hand, was it any guarantee. Under the circumstances, it meant making their lives easier. Geordie would have a definite frame. Ah, yes. It was only a question of the person Geordie had in mind.

"And whom are you going to marry, Geordie?"

He stared bewilderedly across the table. "I don't know yet," he said hesitantly. She saw that he was not lying.

"That's the funniest thing I've ever heard," cried A, laughing. It was typically Geordie. Either he was committing some stupidity and discussing the hows and the whys for days afterwards, or he spent a whole day talking with absolutely nothing definite in mind.

She was certainly not the least bit jealous. If her maid had pleased Geordie, she would have sent her to him in her own clothes. She knew she loved him so much, that the dark voluptuous knowledge that they belonged to one another swept anything else aside, or overlooked it. There was nothing between

them that was not right, from the beginning. Geordie! She gazed with wide open eyes at her brother, overpowered by her passion for him.

At the same time she was overcome by amusement as she thought of him, sitting before his projected marriage as if it were a box of blocks. In spite of her illogical nature, she had a strong feeling for order. Her "first class manager" ate out of her hand while she went over his accounts. And Leigh! He trembled if she looked at him.

It was a decided mistake to take Augusta lightly. Only, it was a puzzle to know where her thoughts became moods, and where she began to think logically again. Between her life and her actions, her being and her doing, there was as vast a difference as between a child and a man. The worst of it was that they sometimes got mixed up. Only, one never knew how or when.

She laughed quietly for quite a while. One hand, with its outspread fingers, moved up and down her knee. It was as if she were freeing herself from something by her laughter. She was often alone now. And her present condition was certainly no pleasure, even though she could ride.

"Good Heavens, my dear boy," she said, swinging her crossed legs, "my first thought was that just because I'm not in form for you at present—that would be no reason for you to rush off and marry. But now, of course, I can't have anything against it. It will certainly be better for you to have a home. I have a husband,—it is only for the first moment, one can quickly forget it. You say you're having bad luck with the mine suit? Didn't I tell you, when we were talking about Leigh's old coach?"

"The luck's bad for the moment only, Augusta. Everything will be much simpler now."

She saw that he was breathing freely again. His expression grew more open. His love for her, which always beautified his face when he looked at her, closed over her in so deep a flood, that she shut her eyes. There was something radiant in Geordie's passion. She could never see it without feeling the blood rush to her heart.

Geordie went round to the stables again to look at a foal. As he watched the little creature, which could hardly stand in its long legs with their pointed hoofs, he felt quite content. A was immensely sensible. After all, what would marriage mean? As good as nothing. And he would take care that it should be someone who would not disturb Augusta, yet who would not have to suffer herself, either.

Perhaps Geordie was sometimes a little wanton in his ideas, but in his actions there was always a rather full measure of responsibility. A man was a man for all that. His wife should lack for nothing. Yes, he would go through with this, too, in order to make A secure. Even this. Would it be the last?

10.

BEL

ANNABELLE MILBANKE stood by the window and looked down into the park; she was only half listening to her mother on whom she had turned her back. It did not even enter her head that there was anything unbecoming in her behavior. While she was speaking, Lady Noel considered as much of her daughter as was to be seen. That the young lady was annoyed was clear from the position of her long, aristocratic legs. The white collar, which she wore outside her sweater, could not conceal the fact that she possessed a fascinatingly white skin.

Lady Noel reflected. She had brought up her daughter in the country. For several decades neither crimes nor vices had appeared in the family circle. Lady Noel was an energetic woman. For the life which went on outside her idyllic cedar park, she had, on the whole, a rather healthy contempt. Hence she was extremely annoyed at her daughter's intentions.

But as each of them respected the rights of the others in their home, Lady Noel had tried never to forbid her daughter anything. She preferred rather to persuade considerately. And it was with the same consideration that she had chosen the time just after lunch, when Lord Noel always walked up and down the drive, to have this talk with her daughter.

The girl turned rather impatiently from the window. Mamma had talked too long already. "Even

if you are right, Mamma, I should like you to realize that Geordie's previous life is of no moment to me."

Lady Noel had just sketched Geordie's past in the style of a dissenting parson. "As you like," said the old lady. "We will drop the subject. But I am afraid that he will ruin your life with his terrible habits. And to prevent that, is why I am here, Bel." She uttered the pet name in such a tone that the girl blushed at the fervor of her mother's raw fanaticism.

"I am not sure, Mamma," she said with the trace of a smile, "whether Geordie is a greater monster than the other young men I know. But I am fairly positive of the ways he is superior to them."

"His horrible books."

"What do you really know of them, Mamma?"

"I've read of them in Jimmy's Review. They are fanfares of his vices. It is all of a piece. The Review is good."

"Then his vices must be very beautiful," said the pretty girl. Lady Noel saw from the pensive look in her daughter's eye, that she was beaten, and she withdrew like a wounded lioness to the chestnut avenue where Lord Noel after his dinner was strolling stiffly up and down. A worthy man, with highly aristocratic movements. His small white beard suited his sharp features to perfection.

As she saw him, it occurred to her that she was doing an unusual thing in disturbing her husband's leisure. Although in reality she managed all the business connected with the estate and their fortune, she was never brutal. Now she had come to act as counsel for her daughter. It was absurd. But what else could she do? Bel was determined to have the grasshopper.

"Bel has set her heart on young Byron," she sighed, as she met her husband on the terrace from which she had a beautiful view of the river which curved there between emerald-green banks.

"She doesn't appear to be in love," said Lord Noel, quite astonished.

"That has probably changed by now. You will have to write the young man this evening."

"I am surprised at your giving your support to the affair," said Lord Noel, lifting his delicate profile to snuff the wind that was blowing from the river. "I should have supposed your taste would be different."

"And don't forget to add that he must send somebody here to draw up the contract. I do not like the custom of dealing with the intended man himself about such business."

Shaking his head, Lord Noel watched his wife go indoors. Bel had been a late comer. He had been married to his wife some forty years. Yet he knew as little about her as of most things that happened in this, to him, unsympathetic world. Bel was like her mother, just as unfathomable. Lord Noel strolled among the cedars. He had no desire to spend much thought on the whims of his women folk. Distinguished, though rather gouty, he strode like a pelican through the rose-hedge, his attention divided in retrospect between a chapter of Plutarch and a new book on conifer plantations which he had begun to read that morning.

Conifers! At that word an expression of tenderness irradiated the old man's features. Yes, he went walking in the chestnut avenue. But that part of the grounds where he and his grandfather had planted conifers—Himalayan cedars, pines, yews, giant arau-

carias, junipers and one primordial cedar of Lebanon, he entered always with the secret feeling with which a young man approaches the spot where his love dwells. And each time he did so, he felt that strange throbbing in his temples that since his youth had been a sign of agitation—and he felt it again.

The negotiations with Hobhouse showed Lady Noel what she had to expect of this marriage. He readily discussed the financial business in detail, yet he roused her distrust by being a bachelor and having no real occupation. Lady Noel hated both these characteristics. Though she did not show it, the whole atmosphere surrounding the marriage was repugnant to her. The theater! Literature! Her nature strove against it, not in any petty way, but passionately, though she really knew hardly anything about such things. Without her temperament, her aversion to her daughter's marriage would have been either comical or stupid. Yet with great dissimulative art, she laid Bel's hand in Geordie's with the predetermination to stand guard over her daughter like a watchdog rampant.

Neither did she feel herself prepared to call Bel's fiancé "Geordie." In this vein, she read everything she could find in the newspapers about him, but never a line of his own. Once she noticed that an unquestionably mean-spirited critic dubbed him, ironically, the "Eagle." It tickled her for a moment, but then repelled her. Finally she happened on an article that, instead of attacking Geordie's work, attacked his noble lineage, which in any case he could hardly help. This appealed more to her feelings. The man's petty spitefulness in calling Geordie "Lord" escaped her entirely. What sort of an oc-

cupation was literature for a man of her own social standing?

"The Lord." She amused herself over it, and began to call Geordie "The Lord" in his absence. Without an ironic intonation, the word on her tongue was meaningless, yet out of consideration for Bel she did not dare use irony. As a result, it sounded as if she were mentioning some monstrosity.

"Why do you always use that horrible 'Lord' when you mean Geordie?" asked Bel one day.

"As you will," said Lady Noel, suppressing the fact that she would have preferred to call him names which she really ought not to have known.

Bel embarked on her marriage with quiet satisfaction. She had known Geordie for a long time, had met him at various places, and even corresponded with him. She had also met Augusta several times at parties. And lastly, she was a distant relation of Lady Melbourne. When Geordie proposed, she had considered the matter fully, yet no matter how she looked at it, he was the best she could see on the horizon.

She was, in a very pleasant way, intellectual. Her eyes were only slightly slanting, while her forehead was broad and arched. Her nose was, for an otherwise classic face, rather strongly retroussé, a smart snubnose, betokening moods and background. Her hair, which was very curly, she wore short, retaining its natural chestnut color. Her chin was really very small. In some strange way an air of sorrow and meditation enveloped her, like a faint perfume. Yet when she smiled, she had a highly exciting physical charm. Geordie accustomed himself to her white skin, which was even paler and more transparent than little Miss Parker's.

Though she was a maiden whom no man had as yet beheld, even in her bath, she made her preparations like an experienced woman. She understood Geordie's nature at once, instinctively. She suggested to him a small house in London with frequent visits to country houses, so that he should not feel tied and could travel about.

Geordie, however, persuaded her that he wanted a large establishment for his young wife, though in secret he acknowledged that she was right. But he really did want a marriage which would mark an entirely new manner of life for him. Besides, he had an unvoiced antipathy to female cleverness. Judging superficially, and from her letters, he was a little afraid that Bel might lecture him on his work.

Geordie with his big house was offering Bel just the opposite of what she wanted. But in her wishes, she considered him rather than herself. She should have married a man who would have given part of his time to developing her talents.

Geordie thought her Artemis eyes—she reminded him of a picture of Bellini's of which Hobby was especially fond—very lovely, and her quietness agreeable. Her nature was harmonious and charming. Yet neither he nor anyone else was the man to form it—that required a skill which Bel could not hope to meet with, for both she and her whole training belonged to the past. But then she did not expect it. For she had always had her eyes wide enough open to know what her contemporaries were thinking. She saw nothing more in Geordie than was there—but she respected his mind even where it really had nothing to do with the case, for example, in arranging their household. She could not quite

grasp that Geordie's ideas on many subjects were more foolish than her own.

To give Bel a chic setting, he squandered enormous sums of money on nonsensical things, though he was almost miserly in his management of Newstead. It distracted him to search for servants, furniture and carpets out of all proportion to the £10,000 on which they had to live.

Bel gave in quietly on all points because she thought Geordie was doing it from feelings to her unknown.

All this amused Geordie and gave him the opportunity to see his lovely young wife in a really expensive frame, instead of the intimate one Bel had had in mind.

During the four weeks they spent at the seaside, Geordie was very attentive. He found Bel charming. So much natural charm, with independence of mind, was rare. Young girls were mostly aggressive, or had lost their illusions. Those types did not please him, for he liked to give himself condescendingly. But Bel was neither proud nor given to enthusiasms. She had a simple dignity, understood the world as it was, and yet revered something which she naively called Beauty.

But in his fear of her coming too close to him, Geordie was steadfastly reserved in matters that concerned himself. He had no real desire that Bel should love anything about him but his masculinity, particularly not the author whose works were now translated into nearly every language, and who must inevitably reveal some part of his character to her untried knowledge of human nature. Bel did not understand that, between the man and his work,

there was a hiatus. For Geordie, literature was a matter of course. For Bel not.

When they returned and moved into their new house—an old palace which Geordie had rented and thoroughly renovated—he took Bel to the stables to show her the horse which he had bought her as a moving-in present. She asked if she might try it at once in the garden, and he helped her mount, but was called away at the moment.

Bel rode round twice, sitting side-saddle in her traveling dress; then returned to the stable. At that moment Geordie came to the window. He watched her dismount. Her cheeks were slightly flushed, her eyes glowed with pleasure at the animal. Her happiness was so great that it touched him. Bel was really charming. Just then she pleased him better than ever. Something of her strong and generous nature was revealed to him and gripped him. She saw him and waved her riding crop. He waved his hand lightly.

Then he caught sight of a picture of A, standing in a small silver frame on his writing table. The little part in her hair, her eyes beneath, slanting, as though they were just awakening from sleep. Brown. Her dress cut low. A terrible longing to see A overwhelmed him. He moved back from the window, laid one hand on the other and pressed them together. The perspiration stood out on his forehead, and his knees trembled.

When Bel entered she saw him standing, his lips tightly compressed, reading a letter. Astonished to meet an icy coldness in his face, she asked, "From whom?"

He handed her the paper.

Bel read it. Augusta congratulated them on mov-

ing into their new home. She knew Bel only superficially, remembered quite well seeing her at one or two parties, and had been, when Geordie informed her of his intention to marry Bel, not delighted, to be sure, but satisfied. In this Augusta hardly thought of herself at all. It was part of the opaqueness of her nature that she was never egoistic. Besides, she was busy taking care of herself at that time. Geordie's marriage took place towards the end of A's pregnancy. She was not having as easy a time with this child as with the others. She had to lie down a great deal and was really glad that Geordie could not see how she looked.

To her Bel was a kind of deer that had been wandering about its own park for eighteen years. What would Geordie do with her? She was rather young; eight years younger than herself, she thought a little dejectedly; for a feeling of depression at the idea of growing old often came over her at that time. Really very young. And she was related to Lady Melbourne, too, which did not exactly please Augusta. But, owing to Lady Noel's disposition, the relations might not even be acquainted. Well, let them, for all she cared! The main thing now was for A to bring her child safely into the world. She felt a slight pang and thought of Geordie. She went to bed, content to think that even that would pass.

Bel held A's congratulatory letter. Geordie observed her expression of curiosity as she opened it, succeeded by a puzzled look that passed into a smile. Augusta's letter was in her half slovenly, half ironic style, which a third person could hardly understand. At the end she announced: "I have just come back from my last gallop." Bel laughed, knowing that

Augusta had not been at the wedding because she was expecting her baby.

"Your sister has quite a sense of humor," she said, laying the letter on the table.

"That is true," said Geordie, biting his lips together. He was so upset that he could hardly wait for Bel to go out of the room to dress for dinner. Hardly had the door closed behind her, than he took a few steps, and stood stockstill in the middle of the carpet, staring at its interwoven blue pattern. Augusta in danger, and he could not get away! The turf-man was probably sitting in the next room, waiting for the doctor to come and calm his fears. Yet *he* was being tortured without daring to show it. *Leigh's* child!

The sweat broke out on his forehead again, and his whole body trembled. It occurred to him that if it were not for Bel he could drive to Six Mile Bottom immediately. But this senseless thought seemed to him foolish even as he thought it. If he went, alone, at this time, to Six Mile Bottom, he would be as good as acknowledging things about which, in all probability, no one had troubled his head since his engagement to Bel. He dared not go to A, he must stay with Bel. Bel was the shield, the wall, which he had thrown round Augusta—and so it must remain. He put himself in chains to insure A's welfare, and he must keep himself in them. That could not be altered. Even if things went wrong. He felt suddenly that he was blaming Bel that things were as they were.

He went upstairs. Shortly afterwards Bel came into his room, in a white evening gown, and at almost the same moment, Fletcher announced that dinner was served.

As he followed Bel down the stairs and looked at her slender, white neck, he thought of the day he first met her. She had been sitting in a drawing room, her legs crossed, talking in her rather deep voice with a crowd of young people. He could not remember the topic any longer, but Bel had certainly not understood half the very cynical innuendoes with which the conversation was shot. He had felt quite sure of it at the time, and it had pleased him. She had stated her point of view quite simply, but with assurance enough to dominate the opinions of the other participants in the conversation. Although the subject was of no importance, she had disclosed a depth of clear sincerity that more than balanced the experience of the others.

It was just this incident he had remembered when, after his talk with Hobby, he suddenly decided to marry. Here was a decisive personality. One had only to look into her eyes to see that she possessed a proud but warm heart. She was certainly not distrustful, and Heaven knows would never arouse distrust in others. No one would ever stand out in such sharp contrast to Augusta as Bel, he thought with some emotion.

Well, he had not let her want for anything. She was charming. But when he thought of Augusta, "coming back from her last gallop," his knees began to wobble.

He stared silently at his plate, and, like an anatomist, began to dissect his fish from which he had already removed the skin, till there was nothing left but the spine.

"My dear, you don't seem to care at all for trout."

"No. Not very much, don't you know."

"We will tell Fletcher that once and for all," said Bel and rang.

"Do not ever serve trout again, Fletcher," she said as the servant entered. "My husband does not care for it. Would you rather not have much fish at all?"

Geordie nodded and saw Fletcher's eyes, with an expression of doubtful surprise in them, fixed on him in the background.

"Yes, not much, Bel, if you don't mind. I will be more vegetarian again."

She looked at him with concern. How pretty it was to see her eyes grow a shade darker.

"I used to do that often, Bel," he added with a smile. "In training. And also because I'm inclined to get fat."

"Impossible, Geordie."

She could not imagine him corpulent. She really couldn't, in spite of her strong sense of reality, separate his personal from his public figure. Of course, if he had been ugly. But his looks suited his noble and manly figure so well that she simply could not imagine him deformed in that way.

It was one of Geordie's peculiarities that though on certain occasions he could be fascinating, yet for hours on end he would talk about shooting and horses with no more intelligence than a member of Parliament. In some odd way his genius did not make him "deeper," Bel assumed, it "elevated" him. A charming glance at his distracted eyes strengthened her opinion. This beautiful young girl simply did not believe in his weaknesses.

"It may surprise you, but at times I've weighed twenty pounds heavier," said Geordie grinning.

She shook her head. "Then we'll eat less flour and bacon," said Bel.

"We'll ride a lot," he said gaily.

Bel nodded and changed color. "Of course—that will be splendid," she replied and stared at her plate.

"We'll go to the theater a lot, what do you say to that? I must take over Clare's shares in Drury Lane. He's going out to India. We'll have a shareholder's box."

"Fine."

"What will Mamma say about it?" he asked, blinking.

"We had better not tell her you are a shareholder. She has such funny ideas. Of course, I'm delighted."

He looked at Bel from under his eyelids. Contrasted with her broad forehead, her mouth had unusual charm. The upper lip had a slight upward fullness. She was very pretty. Of course her chin was too small—that affected her lower lip. He suddenly thought of how Augusta's lower lip drooped when she wanted to laugh, so that it always looked as if she were pouting and about to cry.

A dark flush mounted to his face. He coughed and turned away. For a moment he thought he could not endure the stricture of his breast. Then it passed.

Geordie awoke the next morning with the feeling that he must work. Directly after breakfast he went to his study, and, contrary to his usual habit, worked quite well throughout the day. He felt that during the preparations for his marriage, his honeymoon with Bel by the ocean, and the anxieties of the past few weeks, quite an amount of rather explosive literary material had accumulated and was taking this opportunity to liberate itself.

Bel was charmed by his zeal. Her unobtrusive attentions were really very pleasant. Bel understood

how to dispose her time in such a way that Geordie had her whenever it pleased him. She was busy all the while he was working.

One afternoon Bel opened the door of his study. "Am I disturbing you?"

He looked distractedly at her. "Certainly not."

"I did not want to send anyone else up. Colonel Leigh is here. . . ."

Geordie jumped up and rushed past her, without giving a thought to his lame foot on the stairs. When he looked at Leigh's face he was somewhat quieted.

"All right?" he asked in a voice that stuck twice in his throat when he began. Leigh nodded.

"It happened three days ago. But Augusta was absolutely determined that you shouldn't know until things were going better with her. She is like a cat, soon over it."

"A girl, and I hope the last," said Leigh, without trying to hide, in his square face, the satisfaction his latest fatherhood gave him. "Times are too bad. You must know that, Bel, you have an estate yourself. It is a miserable occupation since imports have become freer." He made a gesture of contempt. Since he had been cut out from the family possessions, and had no further opportunity to raise money on them, they were done for as far as he was concerned. He called the estate a "miserable business," now that it was beginning to pick up. As long as he had no manager, but received only damages done to the grounds by the races, it had always been the "most attractive little strip of land" in the neighborhood of Newmarket.

He rose. "I must go back tomorrow," he said, buttoning his gloves. "If you want to come and

have a look at A—it will cheer the poor rabbit up, I think. . . ."

"What do you say, Geordie, can we go with him?"

"It would be nice," said Geordie, and going to the window, he opened it and looked for Leigh's carriage. It was no longer there. Geordie rang, to lend Leigh his.

"At ten o'clock. We will take our lunch in the carriage," he said, showing Leigh to the door.

He walked up and down outside for a time, before he went back into the house. He needed more exercise, he felt. He and Bel must really go riding together. Owing to the fanatical zeal with which every piece of work inspired him, they had never got around to doing it. As he entered the house again, he felt as if some great weight had fallen from him. Augusta was doing well. He went upstairs immediately, lay down on the divan, and in three minutes was asleep.

As they crossed the threshold at Six Mile Bottom next day, Geordie glanced at Bel's neck. What would happen when the two women met? Many memories crowded back on him as he considered the fair down on Bel's neck. She wore her hair much shorter than Augusta's, for she had not brushed out the natural curls.

He was glad that he was behind Bel—Leigh had gone ahead—for a nervous tremor passed over him and made his teeth chatter. The excitement of seeing A again drowned every other thought.

Suddenly he noticed that Leigh was crossing an empty room on tiptoe, and he did the same. So did Bel. Leigh knocked at the door. A fat young woman opened it a crack. "In two more minutes, please, sir."

Then the door opened and all three entered. First Leigh, then Bel, then Geordie.

In the middle of the big room stood an old carved cradle, trimmed with lace, an heirloom of the Holderness family. "The Yellow Room," thought Geordie. He looked up and, on his right, saw Augusta lying in bed—a different bed than usual, obviously the one in which her children were born. Her little head almost disappeared in it. She kept her eyes fastened on Bel, who went up to her and kissed her throat, at the same time smoothing with her hand A's short little part.

A's gray eyes squinted at what to Geordie's mind was a dreadful creature lying beside her. "Isn't it a perfect little nutcracker? Just like Leigh."

Her brown face had grown terribly thin. She blinked her eyes roguishly. Bel laid a finger on her lips.

"It was a tiring finish this time, Geordie," said A, smiling towards the other side. "But I have decided that it's the last time. Many thanks, Bel. But Lord, two words won't kill me. When I'm on my feet again you must come and stay for a few days. Perhaps at Christmas."

"Of course, A."

Geordie went up to the immense bed, looked at A's ironic face and felt that her eyelids were trembling with agitation. He took her hand for a moment and underwent tortures compared to which the thought of death was nothing.

"You must not talk so much," Bel interrupted Augusta who was about to say something. "You must go now." She turned to the men. She behaved as though she, and not Augusta, had just finished having her fourth child.

At the door, Geordie glanced at Leigh's face, dropped a handkerchief and turned around. Augusta nodded quietly and peacefully. Thank God. But it was dreadful to have to see her in this prison. Involuntarily, as the fat young woman closed the door behind him, he began to walk on tiptoe. He shut his eyes from sheer exhaustion.

When they had reached the hall, Leigh suggested that they take tea. Though it was still early, Geordie maintained that he did not have the time. He had to be in London that evening. Bel drank a glass of orangeade, standing.

It was a bright, sunny day. In many places, the leaves had already fallen in the last few days. Many of the beeches were vermillion red; the moon was a sickle in the crystal clear sky. From the direction of Holland House rose a thin cloud of smoke with a rosy glow. Somewhere in the fields must be a bonfire, for there was a slight smell of burning in the air.

"What a brave chappie," said Bel, setting down her empty glass on the table and going through the hall to the carriage. Leigh stood, legs well apart, on the doorstep.

"Well, sorry I can't drive back with you. It is utterly desolate here at this time of the year."

"Say good-bye to your wife for me again," said Bel coolly. The carriage started.

"A thoroughly disagreeable fellow," sighed Geordie.

"Yes, his manners are not very good," said Bel, reluctantly. It was extremely unpleasant for her to say anything critical about anybody in Geordie's family.

"I could never endure him, even before I met

him," said Geordie. "I was furious when he married A, though I was still at Harrow then, bloodying Clare's nose."

Geordie was so upset that he could scarcely breathe. Not that he felt any tie with the child to which Leigh's paternity might prove a bar. He was not even altogether sure that it was his child. Augusta had said from the beginning that it was Leigh's and she would never discuss the point. It had been clear to him even at Newstead that she had nothing further to say about it. But that that fool should behave as though Augusta really belonged to him—it was intolerable!

He was touched as he thought how nicely Bel had gone over to Augusta. It raised her considerably in his esteem. She had touched him, too, by the spontaneous way she had embraced A. He thought with a tender emotion of Bel's beautiful figure, leaning back against the cushions at his side. They would get on together. She did not get into his very blood as Augusta did, so that he had to close his eyes. But he loved her in his own way. Bel's was not a warm temperament, and maintained an agreeable distance.

He felt suddenly relieved. Augusta was getting along well. That was the main thing. He turned a friendly glance on Bel who was gazing curiously across the ditches. They were just passing the Holland House paddock, and the horses were running up and down in the lovely evening air. Bel looked at him with strangely wide-open eyes. Geordie recalled what had occurred to him the previous evening.

"We must really begin to ride together. You must

make me do it, Bel—I always forget it when I'm working."

"I'm afraid it can't be done," she said quietly, taking his hand.

"Why, Bel?" he asked, surprised. At the same time he noticed that she had deep circles under her eyes.

"Are you joking, Geordie? Don't you understand?"

"Are you sick?" he murmured.

"I've noticed it now for the second time. Do you suppose that only A. . . ?"

Then he understood. It was like a blow on the chin. For a while he sat as though stunned. Then he kissed Bel's hand and whispered something that she did not quite understand. She would have liked very much to know what it was, but did not want to ask, so that she never discovered what Geordie had said to her at that moment.

II.

MISS D. ELLYS

On a foggy London day in spring, Lady Melbourne drove round to lunch with Bel. Geordie was at Newstead Abbey, inspecting the damage done when the whole place caved in during the winter. On the way, Lady Melbourne thought how strange it was that Bel, with her wonderful figure, should be having such a hard time with her baby. She simply never went out. Really, it was odd.

"Here is my card. I think my niece is expecting me, my good man."

"Certainly, your Ladyship. Will you come upstairs?" said Fletcher. "Lady Melbourne really does not need her card."

"One never knows," said Lady Melbourne, who had more experience of London society than Fletcher,—and followed him.

She found Bel lying on a divan. From the ceiling, above her, were suspended two thick rods, to which was fastened a small desk. She was busily engaged in writing on it at the moment.

"Very original," said Lady Melbourne, inspecting the contrivance through her lorgnette. "How are you getting along?"

"Badly, Aunt," said Bel, twisting her mouth a little. "I invited you to lunch, but I'm going to have to be impolite and let you take it alone."

"Then only a sandwich, please, and a glass of madeira. You don't look bad," she said, staring critically.

Bel's face had become rather broad, and it gave her pale, slanting eyes somewhat indeterminate expression. She laughed frankly as she rang.

"Yes . . . but when I stand . . ." she made a shuddery motion.

"You ought to walk more," said Lady Melbourne. "I think it would be better than writing so much. Why don't you go to the theatre?"

Bel flushed slightly. "We have a box. Geordie had to take me away three times. I don't like that. I'd rather copy his manuscript."

"Does he want that? His secretary could do it."

Bel looked at Lady Melbourne for a moment, minus the smile one owes a relative. "Of course, he wants it, Aunt."

"I'm glad to hear it," said Lady Melbourne dryly. "I merely thought, . . . Geordie is not as knee-deep in literature as most authors . . . he has some interests in life beyond ink . . . Listen, my child, my father had the best flocks of sheep in England, but, for that very reason, he could never bear to talk about wool."

Bel again looked questioningly at the chair in which Lady Melbourne was sitting. "Isn't there a difference?" she asked coolly. "Besides, Augusta Leigh is coming for a few days next week. I'm looking forward to that."

"Oh," said Lady Melbourne, and waved her lorgnette. "That will be pleasant for you. How much longer are you going to be about—this business?"

"Seven weeks, I think, Aunt. Perhaps a little longer. As for Geordie—I don't know, I think he's getting rather bored. You can understand. That's why I wrote to Augusta. I am terribly fond of her

—and I have a feeling that she cheers him up. Don't you think so?"

"Very likely," murmured Lady Melbourne.

Fletcher interrupted the conversation with the news that lunch was served. By served he meant that he had brought a silver plate, as big as two bread plates, on which was a slice of toast and a glass egg-cup. This dainty dish he set on a smoking-table to which the large dining-table had ceded its place in the middle of the next room.

Lady Melbourne wanted to tell him that she would rather munch out of her hand, but she refrained, thinking that Bel would probably not want to watch her eat. It would certainly upset her. With a second sigh Lady Melbourne, who had no children, walked past Fletcher's immobile chest, and through the door.

Bel envied her her graceful walk. "But what did she mean about the theatre?" she thought, while Lady Melbourne marched up and down in the next room, consuming her bit of toast. "Mamma makes such stupid innuendoes, too." She drew a letter out of her case and opened it, to read it through again.

There was no doubt that Mamma's letters were aimed more and more at one particular point. The old lady was astonishingly well up in the news.

Geordie had also wondered about it of late. To spare Bel all the tumult in the house that would have resulted from the coming and going of lawyers and witnesses in the Rochdale affair, he had recently rented a small office in the City, where he also kept a few suits of clothes, so that he could change quickly when he needed.

Mamma had taken that as a signal for writing an alarmed letter to Bel. When she, amused by it,

showed Geordie the letter, he had found nothing astonishing about it beyond the promptness with which his mother-in-law knew of the lease two days after he signed it. He had only been in the office once, to show Fletcher how it was to be arranged.

"And the story about the carriage?" thought Bel. "Had not Mamma been johnny on the spot with that, too?" It was really a ridiculous affair. Geordie had refused to accept a certain carriage because the springs were bad, and the man who sold it to him had threatened to dispose of it elsewhere immediately. Mamma had at once made pointed observations about Geordie's financial affairs. Mamma was a tyrant even at a distance. She was against the marriage, and, much as she desired Bel's happiness, could not refrain from inciting her to suspicion of the man who, she felt, threatened that happiness. "A queer nature," thought Bel, who saw through her.

But what was this about the theatre? Of course, to Mamma, everything connected with it was a red rag. She was so pathetic in her complete lack of misgiving, and so wild in her prejudices. Absurd! Because Geordie had a box and went out alone in the evenings. What else was he to do, now that she could not go with him? She let the letter disappear from sight again as Lady Melbourne returned.

"There are no worse dictators than servants," said Lady Melbourne as she took her leave. "I stood still for a moment, and Fletcher immediately came with the tray. I had to eat sitting down. Good-bye, my child, and let me see you soon."

"But, Aunt," said Bel, with comic despair, "when I stand up I get sick, and when I just see stairs . . .

Good-bye. Forgive Fletcher for belonging to the old school."

As Lady Melbourne passed Fletcher she gave him a half sovereign.

"Lady Melbourne should not do that," he said, offended, and put it in his pocket.

"That's what I think," thought her ladyship, and her mind reverted to Bel. "Very nice, this sweet Bel—a true character, and so unsuspicious." But, she asked herself, wasn't that exactly what she had wanted? Hadn't Geordie's choice been excellent? And Bel was obviously happy. The next seven weeks of misery would soon be over. Stupid, that contrary to all expectation, Bel should be having so hard a time with the child . . . for being tied down must make her sensitive.

She leaned forward. "Home, James."

Bel remained plunged in thought. She was not sensitive, in the way Lady Melbourne meant; on the contrary, she had strangely quickened perceptions for all that her condition entailed, and its consequences. The only thing that worried her was that she was dependent on gossip.

All her life long she had stood on her own feet and always been into everything. It made a great difference, she found, whether one was in the thick of things or heard them retailed. This reflection made her feel a slight disquietude at heart. Why? There was no reason. But that she was disquieted was as certain as that Lady Melbourne had white hair.

At that moment she heard Geordie's carriage outside. Her face lighted up, and with a joyful movement she pushed to one side her precious invention,

the writing desk on its pulleys. In that position she waited for some time, but Geordie did not come.

As he had got out of his carriage, a man came up to him at the grille-gate.

"Have you repudiated that demand for payment, sir?"

"Certainly," said Geordie, "I've sent it after your carriage and its crazy springs."

"You refuse to pay?"

"Of course."

Geordie looked at the red, unshaven face, staring at him out of two narrow eyes that really should have been in a different, a pale face.

"For the present, get away from here," he said, going towards the steps.

"You'll see, I'll distrain you," shouted the man, jumping up on the steps.

"I'd like to see you do that," said Geordie. "You must know I like my laugh," and he locked the door after him. He must write to his lawyer about the matter at once.

"A lady has been waiting for you for half an hour," announced Fletcher as Geordie took off his cloak.

"Has my wife received her?" asked Geordie, giving Fletcher his hat.

"She did not wish to be received by Lady Byron, so I showed her into the study. I imagine it is the actress," said Fletcher, who had just been reading that part of the newspaper which was not concerned with politics, and handed Geordie a card.

"Miss D. Ellys," read Geordie, frowning. "Nonsense," he said angrily, turning the card over. "I won't receive anyone who does not wish to be re-

ceived by my wife. And especially ladies of that type—never under any circumstances, Fletcher."

Geordie went up to his study. It was as he had thought: the young lady, being disengaged, had turned to him, as though he concerned himself with roles in plays which seemed to him merely extraordinarily boring. He had absolutely nothing to do with the theatre except in its administration, that was to say, in balancing its accounts, controlling its economy, with, at most, a word to say about the suitability of the directors. Everything else was a matter of complete indifference to him.

The theatre bored him. His own plays he wrote in such a way that they could not possibly be produced. He had his own good reasons for that. As quickly and considerately as possible, he tried to make all this clear to the young lady who, judging by the performance she was now putting on for his benefit, was not excessively talented, though, obviously, ambitious.

"You make me very unhappy," said Miss D. Ellys, and got up as though to go to the door, but went to the window instead.

"I am very sorry to be the author of so much pain, but it happens to everyone sometime in his life," said Geordie, comfortingly, opening the door for her and ringing. At the same time he glanced out the window. "The devil, what weather!" A real April cloud-burst was pouring out of the previously smiling sky. "Have you a carriage? No? Fletcher," he said to the servant, "let Miss Ellys have my wife's carriage. She will wait for it in the hall."

He heard a second bell ring as he closed the door on his unhappy visitor. Fletcher also heard it, and thinking that an order concerning a visitor who had

been treated to so cold a shoulder was not a matter for any great haste, went first to Bel.

"Hasn't Geordie come yet?" asked Bel, without remembering that, as far as Fletcher was concerned, there was no Geordie.

"There was a visitor here, Lady Bel," said Fletcher, "but she is just going. I am about to order your carriage for Miss Ellys."

"I do not know Miss Ellys," murmured Bel, one of whose hands suddenly clutched her heart. Could Mamma be right after all? Impossible. But as a rule everything else that Mamma hinted at came true. For the first time Bel felt her confinement as a misfortune. Until then it had merely been uncomfortable . . . but if Geordie . . .

"Order your master's carriage instead," she said. In her own little carriage—no! But even before Fletcher had got out of the room she judged herself too suspicious. And in no circumstances must she be so. A little straight line appeared suddenly between her eyebrows, a sign of resolution.

When Geordie turned round, after Miss Ellys left him, he noticed a piece of paper, lying under his writing table. He stooped and picked it up. The writing was Lady Noel's. It was addressed to Bel's old nurse, who, as her governess, had long ago taught Bel the distinction between *poison* and *poisson*.

So that was where Lady Noel got her information. He whistled through his teeth. He hardly ever saw the old woman. But one must admit she was clever. His mother-in-law had organized a small spy service. How nice! Bel must not be told about it at present. Later, however,—the business really wasn't very fair.

As he went downstairs, he saw Miss Ellys drive away in his own town carriage. It had stopped raining, the carriage was open, and Miss Ellys was seated, not altogether inconspicuously, within it. As Geordie used the carriage when he drove to the House of Lords, or on official occasions, it bore his coat of arms and several other things that were indispensable in advertising to whom the conveyance belonged.

"At last, my love," he said as he went in to Bel. "How are you?" He took her hand in both of his and sat down beside her on a stool.

"Thanks, Geordie." Bel closed her eyes for a moment. "You had a visitor."

"An actress looking for a part. Wrong address. You must instruct Fletcher once again that only visitors who ask for you are to be received, and that if they are unknown, they must state their business. Is your carriage out of order? It was raining so, I offered it to the Ellys woman."

Bel felt more ashamed than ever before in her life. "I told Fletcher to send yours," she said without looking up.

"That was not very skilfully done," replied Geordie testily. "Now she will drive in it to the theatre, and wherever she can think of—to show in whose carriage she's riding. Oh, well, it's not so dreadful," he added soothingly, as he saw the color deepen in Bel's throat.

"It was very stupid of me," said Bel, confused. She vowed to herself never again to act on such foolish feelings.

"Augusta is coming tomorrow. I've just had a letter from her," she said, and still somewhat upset, rummaged for it in her writing-case.

"Ah, really," said Geordie, not seeing that Bel was charming in her embarrassment. He rose and took the letter to the window, for he felt how furiously his heart was beginning to beat.

"I will have a room made ready for her upstairs," said Bel.

"Whatever seems most practical to you, dear." Odd, how he always felt the need to be alone if Augusta were suddenly mentioned. Even when some quite irrelevant person casually asked about her, his heart always missed a beat. Her name had a direct physical effect on him. But he could not very well leave Bel again at present.

He sat, smothering for air, while Bel explained, one by one, the arrangements she would make so that everything, down to the least detail, should be comfortable for A. For an instant Geordie had the feeling that he must put Augusta off, so dreadful did the hazard seem to him. He trembled at the thought that he might not be able to master himself. The next moment he dismissed the idea. It would rouse suspicion. And why? Since Bel herself had invited A. What reason did she really have to ask Augusta. . . .

Augusta came for a few hours only. She had a heap of things to do, and must be back at Six Mile Bottom without fail the following day, to discuss a lease. But she would return to them in three days. She was full of life and very gay, found Geordie impossible, and Bel a poor dear creature, and was as droll and fresh as any young woman, who comes up from the country and smells faintly, though somewhat tempered by bath salts, of horses.

When she departed after tea, Bel really rejoiced in her heart to have had her there. It was gloomy in

the house. Geordie's thoughts were not to be unriddled. "The poor fellow," thought Bel. It wasn't much fun for him, either, so shortly before the child arrived.

Augusta came to Piccadilly again early one Thursday morning. Geordie had had to go into the City to a meeting. As A entered, she found the hall in disorder. All the furniture was at an angle of about thirty degrees from its customary position. She went up to a huge Renaissance cupboard and saw that it bore a seal with which, from the old days with Leigh, she was not unfamiliar.

At the same moment, she beheld Lady Noel descending the stairs, from Bel's boudoir.

"What have you to say to this, Mrs. Leigh?" she asked, her face an angry red. "I haven't dared tell my daughter. But it's a rascally business."

Augusta examined Lady Noel from head to foot.

"Wait a moment," she said brusquely. She went down the hall, opened a door, found Fletcher, and spoke briefly with him.

"It seems to me, Lady Noel," she said, coming back, "that my brother neglected to meet a contested claim with energy. I've ordered the lawyer to come at once and put a stop to this comedy. Perhaps it will seem the height of originality to you to call that a rascally business."

"When, six weeks before her confinement, my daughter is shocked by heedlessness of this sort, I trust I am quite capable of finding expressions for my feelings myself, Mrs. Leigh."

She supported herself with both hands on the oak table, and stared at A's mouth. Augusta saw that she must let the matter drop, or the old lady would make a scene in the hall. Lust for battle gleamed

from Lady Noel's eyes, and she had already one hand on her hip. Augusta shrugged her shoulders.

"Bel will get more from my brother," she said, simply to say something conciliating, "when the suits for Rochdale are ended."

"As to what my daughter will get from your brother, I'm certainly curious, Mrs. Leigh. So far it has not been much. The first three ladies who congratulated me on his marriage had all had affairs with him."

That was a nasty blow.

Augusta gave Lady Noel an uncertain look.

"Does that surprise you?" she said in a friendly tone. "Even when he was in Cambridge he kept a harem." She went past the petrified old lady, up the stairs to Bel.

Lady Noel gazed furiously after her. The damned little Turk was laughing at her. She would have liked to follow her, but she could not continue the subject in front of Bel. Another time. She faced about and went out to her carriage. Though she was not the least bit prudish, she was always aware in London of that sense of dreadfulness, known only to families who live in primitive healthiness in the country. She shook herself, clasped her hands together, and was overjoyed to see a cloud of dust under which a flock of sheep were passing leisurely, very much as she did, out of the rows and rows of houses into the fat English countryside.

In the meantime A had rushed in to Bel.

"How are you? You *do* look nice, you lovely creature." She took a step backward. She thought Bel charming, though since her chin was so small, her face was really broad. But she held her head like a horse of the thoroughbred school. "A charm-

ing breed," thought A, "and all things considered . . ."

"You'll have to excuse me for lunch. I positively must go and see Marjorie Villiers. We spent our whole childhood together, then she went to Canada. But I'll be back for dinner."

Bel smiled at A's rushing around.

When Geordie returned she lay in a half-sleep. She was a little startled, for it was twilight in the room. As she felt his hand, she said, "Augusta was here—but she's off again already. To Marjorie Villiers."

"That's Augusta," said Geordie. "Here and not here! The first time I saw her, she was sitting in a tree over my head, and wanted to hit me on the nose with an apple."

Bel squeezed his hand and laughed softly.

In the evening she even got up and went to the dining-room, to the horror of Fletcher, who had only laid the table for two. It was touching, to see how her beautiful movements were hampered. She had to stand for a second until Fletcher pushed up a chair for her, and, though she supported herself with her hands on the table, Geordie and Augusta looked away because at that moment she was so helpless and so touching in her dignity. Bel could hold out only until the middle of dinner.

Geordie led her away and made her comfortable on the divan.

"I am so sorry for you . . ."

"But Bel." She had really beautiful animal eyes at that moment, and one could not look at her without being struck by them.

"I say—what's this story about the Ellys woman?"

asked Augusta when Geordie had returned to the dining room. Geordie toyed with a breadcrumb.

"What kind of rubbish is that?"

"You have a truly colloquial way of expressing yourself since you married, Geordie—you can't have got it from Bel." She glanced at him from under her lids, and hunted nervously for something in her bag. Finally, she drew out a paper, "Even as a child Marjorie Villiers was as full of surprises as a grab-bag. This is the evening edition, she had it at tea time. A trusty friend, as you see."

Geordie read the newspaper clipping and laughed. "Now I have a *maitresse en titre,* without ever having kissed her hand."

"Well," said Augusta mockingly, "if her talent is in her legs, and her legs point plainly at you—of course, one no longer needs to speak of kissing hands . . ." and she stuck her fork firmly in her Burgundy glass. She looked at him. "Not on my own account, Geordie. I don't grudge you anything that gives you pleasure. It is only because of Bel."

Geordie laid the apple he was peeling on his plate.

"This time it was Bel who started the whole business." He told her the story of the carriage. But in return, Augusta told him nothing she might have, about Lady Noel. "In spite of that, you must keep the papers from printing these things," she said, and nodded her head towards the next room.

"Useless. She'll hear it second hand."

"The old lady?" asked A, pursing her lips. "Will she be here as soon as she's read it?"

"Oh, she'd return from the Beyond, if the idea occurred to her there that she could give me a punch in the belly."

"Then I'd better tell Bel myself," said A simply,

and, pinning a little hyacinth on her shoulder, she rose.

"Awfully nice, how concerned you are for Bel," said Geordie, and felt a touch of resentment in his words.

"She's pathetic," said A and passed through the door, which Fletcher held open, into the next room.

Geordie followed with a dull sense of anger. He had the tenderest of feelings for Bel. She lacked for nothing, God knows, but, at the same time, he never forgot that she was the bridge to A, the shield before them both. His relationship with Bel was better and more harmonious than it probably would have been, had he married her in a sudden fit of passion. But Augusta acted as if there were nothing in the world but Bel. He was suddenly tormented by a feeling of jealousy, and it was no use at all to tell himself that such a feeling was ludicrous. He had to pull himself together and glance in the glass before he was sufficiently calm to follow A into Bel's boudoir.

"Augusta has just told me," said Bel, only her eyes moving, "the latest turn that that affair with the carriage has taken. I hope it doesn't worry you too much?"

Bel was a little anxious. Geordie heard it distinctly.

"Not a bit," he said lightly, brushing his right hand quickly before his nose. "Done to the mob's taste. You have no idea how stupid and dangerous these theatrical people are when they see a chance of getting into the newspapers."

"Then Mamma was not entirely wrong," said Bel, smiling.

"She was wrong in any case, my love," said Geordie. "In her motives."

Augusta went in to see Bel again before going to her own room. Bel had just bathed and was slipping into her nightgown. She was looking at herself in the mirror.

"Will I ever get back into shape again?" she said worriedly, squinting at her figure.

"Think of me," said A, rubbing her nose against Bel's neck. "Compared with you, I was a rhinoceros." It was not true, but Augusta said it to comfort Bel.

"I can't bring myself to believe that Geordie ever forgets what I look like," said Bel despondently.

"Bel, you're talking nonsense," said A decidedly, and rubbed her hand down Bel's spine as hard as if she meant to slap her, which, in Bel's condition, she did not dare do.

"Why does he always look at you when he laughs?" asked Bel. Augusta faltered. "It's obvious that I don't please him."

"You're a real little fool. Life is not like that; we don't simply 'please' one another. Besides, Geordie himself doesn't look very well. Is he drinking?"

Bel shook her head. Augusta's words had comforted her greatly. She knew, of course, that people in her condition are not quite normal. Augusta was very dear to her. She took A's hand and held it for an instant against her cheek.

"Good night."

A had to take her shower on the first floor, as there were no bathrooms on the second where she was sleeping. As she stood under the water, she let the fine, warm spray flow pleasantly over her body. She was quite pervaded with Bel's feeling. "How she

loves him," thought A, her own eyes growing troubled as she remembered the animal glance with which Bel had inspected her swelling breasts and her body, in the mirror. She was charming in her pregnancy. But there was no doubt about it, a pregnant woman was no Amazon. And, in spite of her mental superiority, Bel had a girlish shame about her condition that was very becoming. "She has character," said A to herself, "and atmosphere." There was something distinguished about Bel. Geordie was very lucky to have such a wife.

A looked down at the water, running over the dark skin of her shoulders, to divide below the little buds of her breasts, and flow, too white, over her belly. There was not a crease in it. She bent a little. Well, there were creases, but one did not see them. Smooth and taut, her body rounded delicately toward her hips. In the two mirrors, she saw it glow palely under the bright light.

Yes, Bel would get back to that state again, too. As she dried herself with the towel, she would gladly have gone down to Bel again, and snuffled around her neck. Nice, pathetic, great Bel! But, afraid of waking her, A wrapped herself in a bath-robe, and went upstairs to Geordie's room.

It was dimly lit.

"At last," said his voice.

She felt she would stifle under the beating of her heart that throbbed from her head to her foot, shook her, and made her unspeakably happy.

12.

THE RIGHT-HAND DRAWER

One evening, about a fortnight after A had gone, Bel watched Geordie's face in the dim lamp-light, when he thought she was asleep. Geordie was awake, but it seemed to her that she did not know his face. There came to her mind what her mother wrote daily. Why did every letter contain a thinly veiled reproach of Geordie, who was always so loving to her? Was there some mystery lurking behind Geordie's face? Since the affair of the carriage, Bel was very distrustful of the whispers of her heart. She was loyal to Geordie, and though all the world spoke against him, she would remain loyal. She was simply horrified to find that her condition sometimes allowed her to conceive ideas which were stronger than her common-sense, ideas which swept her away with them, like a mad woman.

Where was her poise, her reserve, her clear judgment? Bel felt uneasy, as though the child that was on its way were causing the anarchy in her nature. She hoped that would soon be over. "Perhaps," she thought, "there are similar changes going on in Geordie. One knows nothing of men. They do not have to take any physical part in this business. But perhaps they sometimes received a blow, morally. And besides . . . they had to keep their distance at such times. How did most of them manage . . . it probably wasn't easy. Probably most of them had a little friend?"

Had Geordie embarked on an affair, somewhere?

But why not simply say so? She was not a goose, who could not see necessity, or who would blench back from facts. Pleasant it was not, God knows, but it would be better than putting on a calm face to conceal the tangle of feelings behind it. That was terrible. Bel found the idea not morally evil, but almost physically unclean. She half opened her eyes.

"What time is it, dear?"

Geordie's face changed at once. The forehead became tense. His beautiful, straight nose showed signs of life, his eyes recovered their expression, and his mouth took on a look of actual life, as though the blood pulsed through him suddenly. Geordie came out of the depths.

Bel watched it, only half heard the time Geordie gave her, then dropped gently off to sleep under the sound of his voice, as she had done as a child, at her aunt's, at the sound of the cathedral chimes.

Sometimes Geordie thought he could no longer endure his situation. His nature was made to take things in hand, to act, to attack, to dispose, to grow breathless over matters which he often evoked out of nothingness. Now he was in a dreadful trap, and the worst of it was, that he had set it himself. To have to wait! To have to sit and wait! Never to be able to afford a false step! "To wait," he thought, "and wait!" He was already quite unnerved with waiting . . . for better or for worse. He seemed to be living under guillotines.

But that was not the worst. When A was there, it was difficult, to be sure, and he took the greatest care that Bel should not notice anything—but at least he lived then. He simply needed to imagine the sound of A's voice, or the way in which she

squinted her left eye, for his whole body to tremble. But when A was not there, or when, as now, he sat beside Bel's couch, and waited and could not work, then his resentment sometimes grew to terrible proportions. He needed all his strength of mind to prevent Bel from noticing that sometimes he hated her. For what? Because in her noble way she shielded him from the world! How absurdly illogical his feelings were. And yet he nourished a decided aversion to his beautiful young wife, and one which grew from day to day.

In the darkness he pressed his knees against the wall until they hurt. He rose and groped with his hands towards Bel to find if she had fallen asleep. As she made no movement he went on tiptoe into the garden.

It would soon be summer again. Had he noticed anything of it yet? The lilac was blooming again. Where had it been last time? He recalled the conversation with Hobby. Yes, then he had subjugated himself—intentionally. No rebellious feelings could alter that. He would not let himself become warped and sentimental. If A were to have peace, then everything must remain as it was, Bel and he and the whole situation.

He thrust out his chin and set it hard. Let the garden scents be what they were. Everything would remain as it was.

He went up to his study, poured himself a glass of whisky, took a hunting rifle, the barrel of which was bent, and with it bashed to pieces a chair, in the middle of the room. It was weakness, but still he was only a man, and he needed air. He breathed deeply, then exhaled again.

As he turned around, to put the gun back in its

corner, he saw Bel's face for an instant in the doorway. He ran out, but did not see her in the hall. He had just left her downstairs sleeping. It must be a mistake.

"Am I mad?" he muttered, while he gathered the remains of the chair lovingly together as if they were an artistic rarity—and threw them in the fire-place. He felt somewhat better for the escapade.

When he went down to dinner, there was no sign on Bel's face that she had seen anything upstairs.

"Have you anything important on tomorrow?" she asked, stretching out to him her white arm from which the sleeve had slipped back.

"A bit thinner than it was, but still pretty," thought Geordie. He shook his head. "Nothing particular."

"Augusta promised to come when things got hot. I still have a good fortnight—but do try to get her here. Stay down at Six Mile Bottom for a few days yourself, though. It must be so glorious down there now."

It was impossible to leave her alone. "That won't do, Bel."

"I would be very glad if you'd go," said Bel and looked at him out of darkened eyes. He saw they had tears in them.

"Of course, I will go, if you wish it, dearest," he said, his lips compressed tightly.

She herself was sending him to A. But he would not stay there, not even for a day. Yet Bel was not the person to give in. He had to promise her to go riding there, one afternoon at least. Here he simply sat about and did nothing.

He thought the plan over in detail while he dined alone. Why did Bel want him to go? It was

really touching of her to worry about him when she was so near the end of her martyrdom. And the end was no joke for her.

Next morning, after Geordie had ridden off, Bel received from her mother a letter which excited her very much.

Lady Noel's aversion to her daughter's husband had increased so much that she now preferred under all circumstances to prove his worthlessness to Bel, rather than to spare her daughter.

Her letter was very exact. In Geordie's study, in the upper, right-hand drawer (with the flap-cover) were letters which proved that Geordie was deceiving Bel with another woman. A clear chart was given on a blue-print. This time Bel was taken aback by the precision with which Mamma hurled her accusation. But Lady Noel had underestimated her daughter.

How did Mamma know that—even to the drawer? It could not be by any decent means. "Lucy," she decided shortly. She was Mamma's spy. She would be thrown out of the house, if it were true.

It was perfectly clear to her that she should do nothing about this letter. She thrust it into her writing case. She drank a cup of bouillon and fell into a light sleep. On waking she felt a slight pain. She saw Geordie's face before her, as she had seen it with terror the previous day. She had not been asleep, but, aroused by the lost expression he had had as he sat by her divan, she had watched him from the window, walking in the garden, and had followed him more slowly when he dashed up the stairs.

It occurred to her at that moment that A had asked if he was drinking. She had seen him with

an open bottle and with the chair. Was he mad? With tears in her eyes she had gone downstairs again; how, she did not know, and had arrived at the conclusion that something must happen. She immediately thought of Augusta. Geordie must get away from there, must go riding, must fetch A. This plan she had carried through.

But now came the doubt as to whether she had acted wisely. Was there not, perhaps, something else at work in Geordie? Mamma's letter! At the same time she felt the old distrust settle darkly down on her again. She could hardly ward it off. Something seemed throttling her, and her heart refused to function. It seemed to her as if self-preservation itself demanded that she finally have some certitude.

And though she told herself that she was doing something for which she could never make amends, she got up, clenched her teeth, collected all the keys she could find, and went upstairs to Geordie's study.

"I must be mad," she muttered, trying the keys.

One little key fitted, but as the drawer opened under her hand, the lock snapped. The drawer was full of manuscripts. There were two compartments at the back. One was full of fishhooks. "Odd," thought Bel. Fishhooks! She might have come to her senses if, in the other compartment, she had not noticed a bundle of letters.

Those at the left were in Augusta's writing. They did not interest her.

She took out the other bundle. There was a string around them, which she untied. The letters fell on the desk. Bel opened a few. The dates soon showed that they were part of a correspondence, belonging to a time long before she had met Geordie. As she began to read, and encountered things, which to a

woman who had never read unrestrained letters, were like a blow in the face, she paused to reflect a moment. From the signature she saw that these were Caroline Lamb's letters that she held in her hands.

At the same time, she began to feel so ashamed that the tears ran down her cheeks. She suddenly realized that she had broken open her husband's desk in order to read his correspondence. Mamma had caused her to do this hideous thing. At that instant, even before Bel could let the letters drop from her hand, Lady Noel had lost her daughter's love.

And while she could scarcely breathe with shame and loathing, she felt that slight pain again, then it gripped her whole body until it became unbearable.

"Geordie," she stammered. That was it—it was coming already. Then she sank down and slid to the floor. In falling she struck the top of the desk; the drawer fell into place and the lock snapped to. Not for a quarter of an hour did the old nurse call Fletcher. Then the letters were no longer there. Together they carried Bel slowly downstairs. The same afternoon, the letters were on their way to the cedar park.

Lady Noel, who did not understand them, experienced a sensation similar to what she would, had some one sent her a pan of live coals. The same day they were passed on to Lord Lamb. As they were sent anonymously he had his servant open them. His man confirmed the fact that they were all addressed to Geordie, in Lady Lamb's writing.

To the big man with the blue eyes, who would not touch the letters, it was perfectly clear that the correspondence had reached him through channels which

were not proper. The idea of reading the letters never even occurred to him, instead he did the only 'fair thing,' by returning the packet to Geordie.

Geordie never did understand why the horse-breeder, on his estate in the country, suddenly sent him a packet of letters that his wife had once written to Geordie. He had no idea that the letters had ever been in his desk.

At the moment when A had been in greatest danger, she was in the saddle, in her black riding-boots. Geordie noticed, as they trotted, that the leather on the inside of A's thighs shone red against the dark stuff. She wore a black smoking-jacket, with a wide, starched collar over it. Her hair was always neatly parted over the left eye. She wore her hair shorter than Geordie's.

They had only two hours to spare.

"We must hurry, little sailor," said A over her shoulder, "if we're going to say good-day everywhere." By 'saying good-day,' Augusta meant riding to all the places they had been when Geordie was at Six Mile Bottom. It meant a good two hours run if they were to see all the dear old places, the pond, the path through the woods, the soggy field-path to Holland House, and the avenue with its view across the heath.

A was not the least bit sentimental. She liked these places because they belonged to her, and were, so to speak, the high-points of her estate.

Huge purple-edged clouds were driving over the poplars, which stood like halberdiers in front of the house, as they returned. From behind the oak wood, a flock of little lavender-colored clouds came fluttering, blowing slowly along to the chestnut avenue.

"Look," said A, "how he stands."

She was riding a young horse with a narrow back, who, as she reined him in, stood with his lower jaw against his throat, mouthing his bit, so that the flecks of foam flew lustily in all directions.

The sun was just wheeling into position to blaze down into the shady avenue like a flash of fire from the mouth of a cannon. From her saddle, Augusta made a little, mannish bow in the direction of the trees. The bit of childishness looked especially charming in her riding habit. She leaned over her pommel, only her shoulders thrust forward, laughing with her eyes as she squinted back at Geordie. He thought that he had never yet seen her so fresh, so young, so sweet and sharp at one and the same time, never so ingenuous, so deeply desirable as now.

He rode forward until his horse was beside hers, and laid his arm round her shoulder. It was good to be in the country with her. His surroundings always excited him. The air was bluish-white far across the heath, which glowed beneath it, warm and steaming.

He bit his lips together, gathered reins and whip in his right hand, and drew A to him, until she was almost lying on his saddle. She freed herself, laughing, and wheeled her horse. "Good-day."

She waved her right arm in the air. Half childish, half grandiose, Geordie saw that she really treated an avenue exactly like a human being. It seemed to him that he had never seen anything as strange as this creature. Somehow she stood beyond all customary reckonings. In her blood was really all nature's recklessness, all her capacity for refined and subtle contradiction. He shut his eyes. And as he followed her at an unusually slow gallop, there

again overpowered him that passionate feeling of satisfaction, that Augusta was just what she was, and that she should have crossed his path. "In spite of everything," he thought with a sudden shudder that sent the spur so sharply into his horse's side that the animal reared. Yes! In spite of everything!

They passed a half dozen spots where A said 'good-day.' Geordie came behind and watched how she rode. She had a heavenly, boyish way of galloping. One could not have slipped a leaf between the saddle and her thighs. Really marvelous!

Geordie let his reins fall, and pressed with his right knee a little in front of the girth, to give his horse his head and drive him beside Augusta.

A two hour gallop and moderate trot had made Geordie, who was no longer accustomed to it, pleasantly tired. He drank his tea half in a dream, and then sat quietly and tranquilly beside Augusta in the carriage.

As they drove, all the things which had been occupying him seemed clearer. As long as Augusta was with him, his life had a certain organized depth; he could survey his plans, his actions, his hopes, and feel a quiet joy in the possession of this harmony.

Really, in spite of his torments, things had not gone so badly of late. While A was in Piccadilly he had finished "Parisina" and "The Siege of Corinth." Two books. He stretched out his legs. It was so agreeably warm in the summer twilight which was just falling. He did not even want to hold A's hand. Only just to sit there, to know that she was lying back against the cushions beside him, chattering nonsense as usual . . . at last things were beautiful again.

When they reached Piccadilly it was already dark.

Geordie preceded A to the house, and, as he opened the door, heard a sound that sent all the blood out of his face.

Augusta came in.

"What was that?" asked Geordie hoarsely.

"It has begun, sir," replied Fletcher. "It's nearly five hours. The doctor says it is going smoothly. It is also my opinion that. . ."

Just then Geordie saw A dash up the stairs.

He threw himself into a chair in a corner of the hall. He was sorry for Bel. He liked her, and it grieved him that she was suffering so terribly. At the same time, something in him resented her taking A away from him again. He had seen Augusta's gray eyes growing moist, as she turned and climbed the stairs three at a time. Jealous of Bel? Surely it was neither the moment nor the place for tragic jesting. But as long as he sat in the hall, and waited, he would not be able to rid himself of a feeling of irritation at Bel. Did he really hate her? Absurd!

What confusions! Jealous of his own invention to secure A's safety! He must suppress that feeling very firmly, he told himself emphatically. Nevertheless, it was there.

At last he rose, crossed the room, and turned to the wall an engraving of the Newmarket races, which faced him where he sat. No horses now!

13.

CERTAINLY NOT, PAPA

A FEW weeks after the birth of a daughter, Bel strolled into the park one day after lunch in order to meet her father on his daily walk in the drive. She had arrived two days earlier with the baby, to show it to her parents. The child had arrived so suddenly that Lady Noel could not be fetched in time, and then there was delay in sending the news because Lady Noel was ill and must not be excited. She was still unable to leave the house, and was deeply hurt by the reserved way in which Bel greeted her. She no longer knew her daughter, she seemed a figure of stone when she sat alone.

For the first time in her life, Bel failed to find her father under the chestnuts where, wonderful to behold, old and dignified, he paced up and down on his thin legs, to keep his blood circulating.

She sauntered slowly across to the conifer plantation. There he stood, somewhat anxiously inspecting a baobab, that looked as if it were twisted out of steel, with its monumental arms thrust boldly into the air.

With his cane he indicated the tip of a branch, lying on the ground. "That yellow spot, Bel, is giving me much concern. It keeps getting nearer and nearer to the trunk, and I'll probably have to make up my mind to cut off the branch. But, architecturally, the tree will be ruined." He spoke sorrowfully, and shading his eyes with his hand,

stepped back several paces to let the silhouette work its enchantment.

"What a pity," said Bel, and turned to look her father in the face. "Papa, I should like to have my marriage annulled."

Sir Ralph could not have been more taken aback had she annihilated his whole plantation with a bomb.

"Has anyone done anything to hurt you?" he asked at last, with frightened eyes. He thought of all the things that can happen in this world, against which he had never imagined that he might one day have to protect his daughter. Now it had come. Anxiously, and breathing slowly, he listened while Bel told him of Geordie's fits of melancholy and of the shattered chair.

Sir Ralph noticed that, during the recital, she often drew back and trembled. Had she been so badly maltreated? For a moment he looked beyond his library and his plantation, straight into life itself. It was certainly better here. Bel should remain. But what was yet to come?

Slowly and in detail she told everything. There was a long succession of incidents by which Geordie had thoroughly shocked her. She was obviously of the opinion that her husband was not quite normal. Yet it was difficult to say anything definite about that. His wife had declared the same thing before the marriage, and yet had agreed to it. He had always been against it. But his objections had never been listened to, partly, perhaps, because he did not care to mingle in such disputes, and partly because his opposition was always more or less in theory. But now it had come.

"I don't know if what you have told me is suffi-

cient, Bel. Hm! Don't you want to try once more? At your age one must not be over-hasty. And, besides, there is the child."

"It's no use," said Bel, with so disconsolate an expression, that it cut Sir Ralph to the heart. "Geordie is really the most insane person I know." Only she was conscious of the ironic ambiguity of her remark. And it seemed to her as if she could no longer endure that lonely consciousness, but must reel to the ground.

"I hope the child has not inherited anything," said Sir Ralph, turning his back on his diseased tree.

"Certainly not, Papa," said Bel in an unusually irritated tone. "May I ask something of you, Papa?" She snuggled against his shoulder as she had not done for years. "Tell Mamma for me. She has got her way now. But I've been through so much that I can't go over it with her. No, no," she cried, beside herself, and nearly burst into tears on her father's breast.

Lady Noel was filled with gratuitous rejoicing when Sir Ralph, who suddenly found himself called upon to shoulder responsibilities of which for decades his wife had relieved him, told her what had happened. She had won.

But she very soon noticed that she had lost her daughter's love in the process. She brooded dreadfully as to how and why, but could find no reason. There was something frightful in Bel's expression, even when she laughed—something that was unsaid to her mother, and yet still accused her. But not a word could be got out of Bel.

It was horrible for Lady Noel to watch—yet nothing could be done about it. It could not be that business of the letters—that much she had discover-

ed. Or was it the letters? Well, Bel would have to get over it.

She herself had had to get over many things. The child of her first marriage had been born in the coach during a journey, and was dead before she reached home; and in her second marriage there had been no question of passion as in the first. But Bel was made of the same stuff she was. She would gnaw her way through. Grief was doing it already. And better now, at once, than later. With the fellow she picked, she would have had to go through still more horrible experiences. That much was certain. Let Bel be angry because of 'the Lord'—God, she must have somebody to hate. Let her hate her mother, as much as she liked. She would return to her mother's heart in time.

She thought of how Bel had sought her breast as a babe. It will all pass, Bel. Only be strong!

Bel was strong, there was no doubt of that.

When Sir Ralph had been twice to London to confer with the family lawyer, Lushington, with Hobhouse and a cousin of Geordie's to represent the other side, and nothing had come of these consultations because both Hobhouse and the cousin laughed as soon as Sir Ralph described Geordie's reputed madness, Bel packed up to go herself.

"Is she really going to Lush alone?" Sir Ralph asked his wife in astonishment the night before. How could she permit it? She shrugged her shoulders.

"She has taken it into her head, my dear,—just as she once did to marry 'the Lord'." She laid one hand on the back of the chair, and the other over it, and remained standing that way.

Bel sat for a half hour in the reception room of

the lawyer, Lushington, who had been at Harrow with her father, and was called Lush by the family. Before she was summoned in—(she had no appointment, and Lush was in the midst of a conference)—she went over in her mind once more what she wanted.

She had changed so much in the last four weeks that when she looked in the mirror she was astonished at her own face. When, a fortnight after the birth of her daughter, she had seen A come out of the bath and go in to Geordie's bedroom, she thought at first that it would kill her. She had supported herself against the wall with the palms of her hands. But the next instant there was forged in her the last link in a chain of realization, which she had all the time sensed, but simply never understood. So that was it!

As she tore her pillows with her teeth in order to remain silent, she thought she would go mad. That, too, she had slowly conquered. And that night, also, passed.

Up to the moment of her departure she had been friendly even to Augusta—and A, it was impossible not to observe, was affectionate to her.

During all that time Bel did not allow herself to think of anything that did not fit in with her plans. Sometimes she was tortured by a doubt whether she had not been mistaken that night. What had really happened? She did not know. But each time she recalled the innumerable signs—from that conversation at the beginning of their married life—(it was already rather cold)—when she had read Racine's 'Phedre,' and had asked Geordie casually how he felt about the problem of a brother and sister's . . . she could go no further.

There was something going on, that was certain.

Perhaps before their marriage. But that was all one —she dared not let anything be observed until she had got away. She wanted to get out of these surroundings, out of this atmosphere, in which she suffered the torments of hell,—even if it killed her to go. More for the sake of the child than because of her wounded pride. "The child must be kept clear of this affair," was her one thought. No scandal—not at any price.

That gave her the strength to dissemble, as only a woman can dissemble who believes she is right, and has an end in view. With the utmost self-control she fought against hating anybody or letting herself become bitter. Her friendliness toward A was almost pity. Was she to blame after all? Was it not more probable that Geordie had dragged her into this business?

Of course, it was a sacrilege in A, too. She must not think about it, above all not brood over it, only get out of it all. She realized that she needed all her strength,—but to be shrewd rather than hard. She did not simply want to have her way. The child must grow up without anyone's knowing of the business.

When she was summoned into Lush's private office, she felt like a little child before this old man, who resembled her father, only he was more upright, still rode, and his pointed nose was longer. He had always looked that way as long as she could remember. No more of that. She looked straight at him.

She told him what she had already told her father.

"Nonsense," said Lush, when she had finished, and looked impatiently at her. "When you went away from your house in Piccadilly, you left a friendly note for your husband. That makes everything

you have just told me illusory." The old man bisected something in the air with his hand.

"That was tactics," said Bel coolly. "That's plain enough, surely."

"To you—possibly. It has simply caused a tremendous scandal. Of course, everybody thinks you've run away."

Bel crossed her legs and puckered up her forehead. "Very well then, I will tell you something that no one, but us two, must know."

They had a long conversation in the course of which Bel discovered that even in London celebrated lawyers can be shocked. "I do not wish my husband to know my reasons for annuling our marriage—any more than I do my family. Furthermore, I do not wish my child in any way to come under the influence of my husband . . . ever."

"Divorce is not possible," said Lush, "unless you give grounds for it."

"You know the situation. There must be some way."

"Everybody thinks that the law has loopholes for those who are in the right—but law wants facts, witnesses, testimony on oath, Lady Bel."

"I cannot alter my intentions. You must see yourself that that is the only way in which my child and I can be left in peace."

"Then let me tell your husband what you know. Otherwise all you can hope for is a separation. But the other side are not likely to want that. You have put yourself in the wrong with that damned letter."

"Exactly what does the separation you mentioned mean?"

"You remain his wife. He can inherit in your name; all legal effects remain as they are. At the

same time, you *are* no longer his wife. You can live alone, and do not have to see him."

"That will be sufficient," said Bel. "He must, however, sign a proviso to let the child alone—and never see it. You must draw that up very exactly, Lush."

"Gladly. But your husband will not agree to that."

"We shall see."

She took her leave hastily, and drove back, after having begged him to let her know immediately what he succeeded in doing. Lush stared after her in amazement. Only yesterday she had been a child. A remarkable breed. Where had she got it from? Hardly from that old visionary who planted Christmas trees down there in the country. Lushington stared for a while longer into space. Then he sat erect, rang, took up his broad gold-rimmed monacle, and said to the clerk, who stood in the doorway, "The next client."

When he spoke to Hobhouse next morning, he was no nearer to a result. Hobhouse and Geordie were both enraged by what seemed to them Bel's treacherous disappearance. To leave behind a letter with best regards and the hope of meeting again in a week or two—which was not even necessary, when everything was carefully considered—that was more than mere frivolity! And the reason? Geordie guessed as little as did Hob and A that Bel suspected what was really going on. To all three of them Bel's reasons were simply incomprehensible.

"That business with the chair—even if it were true," said Hob to the lawyer, "would you seriously venture to call that madness? Have you never smashed anything to pieces?"

"Listen," said Lushington, impatiently, "the facts specified by me will be witnessed and attested on

oath. It is not my business to discuss my client's character. If it suits you to refuse to agree to my proposals, I shall have to make further inquiries, and then give you an appointment for a new consultation."

They parted coldly. Nevertheless, Hobby was not altogether easy about matters. He had a feeling that something was not quite right in this business. If, at least, Bel would say that Geordie had betrayed her with God who knows whom, everything would be all right. But Geordie's madness? Nobody was going to believe that.

And the unfortunate part was that the affair could not possibly be kept secret. Old Lady Noel had seen to that; she had been unable to restrain her cry of victory. There was no denying that the young wife had run away. Of course, as one could already read everywhere, she had been treated unspeakably by Geordie. What else could it be? But what were her specific reasons? The newspapers had been asking quietly since yesterday. There would be the devil to pay when the puzzle became a public one. In his mind's eye Hobby saw the head-lines: 'Member of the House of Lords'—'Author of Childe Harold'—'Big Coal Suit'—'Debts' (the devil of it was, it was true)—'Original way of looking at life'—'Wife runs away.' . . And how would Bel appear in the papers? A young girl who cannot be reproached with even as much a flirtation; who obviously loves her husband; the daughter of an honorable lord from Sussex. What a devilish situation! The journalists would piece things together till their fingers ached. And with them, all good people with an old hatred of Geordie. Hob shuddered. The blow must be prevented. He hurried to Geordie.

The next day Bel's 'flight' was, as far as the public went, a sensation such as London every few years, for incomprehensible reasons, attaches to some incomprehensible trifle. For months there had been an abundance of wild affairs that had all passed unheeded. Then Bel changed her residence, went to live on her father's estate, and, it was rumored, wanted to get a divorce because of her husband's insane behavior—the result was as if a cabinet minister had suddenly announced that Ireland had withdrawn from the Empire.

It was enough to drive one mad. And the worst of it was, Geordie was not anywhere to be found. Two days previous he had gone into the country. "If one could only be sure that Bel really knows nothing," thought Hobby in desperation. He had scratched his hand on his carriage and gnawed so long at the tiny wound that he had already bitten away the skin on the side of his finger.

And of course Bel had all the best papers. The carrion-eaters were now having their revenge on Geordie, who for years had all too plainly shown his contempt for them. It was all artificially built up, this drama of moral indignation and so forth. If one could only slam the door on the whole pack.

How they whipped up the public! It was even being said now that Geordie mistreated Bel. She, of course, was wearing the customary halo, the kind that is worn by so many of those arrogant madonnas in the National Museum at Cologne, a halo that look like a hat, and, thought Hobby sourly, exactly suited an intriguing country lass.

Hobby bought a bundle of newspapers, but read only the two best. It was enough to make one shriek. In deep distress, he saw the avalanche de-

scending. What was following behind? What might not happen, besides, as the result of its impact?

He tried again to reach Geordie. No one knew where he was. He wasn't at Six Mile Bottom. Nor at Newstead Abbey. Some understanding must be reached with Bel as quickly as possible. Should he go to the Noels? He decided that he could not take that step without consulting Geordie.

At Hyde Park Hob bought the evening papers, but flung them away at once. The big game hunt was still on, but, as there were no facts at hand, they were inventing stuff for the head lines. Much upset, he went to his lodgings. On the way, he wondered why Augusta had, to a certain extent, taken Bel under her wing. Augusta was away, of course, so he could not very well question her on her interesting reasons. But it wasn't necessary. A never had reasons, only instincts. What answer would she give? Hob knew it by heart already. Bel was different, and so forth. That was the way interesting women saw life. Those were their arguments.

He thought with a certain satisfaction how his private life flowed along unnoticed, unobserved, beyond reach of all discussion. And for that reason, he reflected grimly, everyone's else was piled on him.

The tall spare man, with the sharp, tanned features, and the well-bred gait which was still somewhat athletic, crossed the street quickly. In view of the sensation caused by Bel's flight, he was constantly, though silently, troubled as to whether he had advised Geordie for the best when, as furious as the latter, he had urged him not to follow her to her father's, and there somehow nip matters in the bud.

But the way in which Bel had gone off, that leaving with the hypocritical letter, was too hideous. Hob glanced up and gave a start. He had nearly been run over.

At the same moment, an awful thought entered his mind. It dawned on him, for the first time, that the letter might be a trick. And if it were a trick, then Bel knew. And if Bel knew. . .

He started when he heard his name called, as if somebody had shoved a stick between his legs. He was confronting Lady Melbourne, who, bundled in furs to her feet, was just coming out of Hyde Park.

"What do you think of our friend's portrait?" she asked, pointing to a newspaper in her other hand.

Hobhouse made a feeble movement with his hand as though to treat it as a joke.

"By tomorrow he'll probably be accused of some piquant sort of relationship with his bear. It will all have to come to an end some time." But he did not look very consoling.

"You don't believe that yourself. Do you know where I can reach Geordie?"

"I've been looking for him myself since yesterday."

"Unless he or Bel gives an explanation by tomorrow," said Lady Melbourne, "then quite definitely, certain questions are going to be asked."

Hobby observed from the way she gnawed her lips that, in spite of her sarcastic tone, she was really upset.

"Augusta will notice at St. James,' tonight that people won't stop to consider her feelings," she said, and inspected the inside of her sunshade. Hobby had an idea.

"If Augusta has to go to a ball at St. James', Geordie will be there, too." It was one of those

balls which, as A always said, her Princess could not live through without her.

"Go to Lushington again. This affair must be arranged quickly at any price. Adieu. And drop in early tomorrow morning to see me, sir!

She took herself hastily off. "Why does she carry a parasol in the shade?" thought Hobhouse.

To his relief Hobby found a despatch from Lushington awaiting him, urgently inviting him to a conference the next morning. He tried once again to find Geordie, but did not succeed. So he went to bed. But first he visited his library again. "It may be difficult tonight," he told himself. He drew from the shelves 'The Art of Using Artificial Flies,' the book Augusta had studied when she began catching roach.

The next morning he went to his appointment without looking at a newspaper.

"Mr. Lushington is expecting me. Here is my card," he said to the clerk. Lushington stood up as Hobhouse entered his private office, and begged him to be seated. Silently he undid a bundle of documents and fingered them over for a while.

"Old trick," thought Hobby, but he felt uneasy.

The truth was that the unlooked-for flare-up of sensationalism had startled Lushington as much as Hobhouse. He had immediately sent a dispatch to his client, begging her to allow him to use 'pressure,' otherwise neither party would get safely over the scandal. What peculiar questions might not the papers ask tomorrow? And if they asked. . .

Bel, who saw that Geordie would not give in unless at least his agent were threatened (it did not matter that that happened to be Hobhouse, 'the most

proper man in London') sent back the order: "Make the intimation. But let it come from you."

Lushington, toying with his bundle of papers, glanced from under his lids at the man sitting opposite him, to see how far he would have to go. But there was nothing to be gleaned from that damned, sporting face. It couldn't be helped, he must make him pale. Really, it grieved him, for he was a fine old man, and very unwilling to make shady moves in a respectable case. At last he looked up.

"Until now, my client's stipulations have been: Separation on the grounds stated by her and known to you, her husband to surrender all claim to the child, and to make a declaration that he will at no time try to influence the education, residence, and so forth, of the child." Lushington paused. "So far you have refused to agree, or to sign this declaration."

Hobhouse nodded mechanically. Was it coming at last?

Lushington sat back and played with a pencil that lay in front of him on the desk. Then he rose quickly.

"Mr. Hobhouse," he said, "until today I have restricted the whole affair to the persons immediately concerned. I can no longer spare your feelings by failing to mention the consequences which this scandal will have for members of your friend's family. Above all, for his sister."

Hob also stood up. So he had been right all along! Had he not had himself well in hand, he felt he would have trembled from head to foot.

"No, you do not need to mention it, sir. The scandal is so unpleasant for us, that we will sign under any conditions. I mean, of course, that my

friend will sign. But our viewpoint, as regards Lady Bel's behavior, is not altered in the slightest by that."

"As you like," said Lushington, dryly. "Shall I have a deposition drawn up?"

"Give me the original declaration. I will send it back to you, signed."

"Don't be too long about it," said Lushington, who was again playing with his pencil. "If I have to call off the newspapers, I must have it by four o'clock. By half past four I shall be riding in the Park. I am an early riser, and therefore go to bed early."

"Now, in God's name, to find Geordie," thought Hobhouse as, with long strides, he left the famous lawyer's office. He threw himself into a carriage. Fletcher came to the door. Geordie had arrived during the night, but was not at home.

"Pardon me, sir," said Fletcher, "have you seen the papers? Mr. Hobhouse, it is a crying shame that one can't go and throw a bomb at those fellows. Would you have ever believed, sir, that one could possibly have thought up one-fifth of the stuff they have fabricated?"

"I should not have believed that an old man would let himself be so upset by such rubbish, Fletcher," said Hobhouse. He left the offended servant and drove to Lady Melbourne's. Geordie was not there. She told him that Augusta had been very coldly treated by most people at the ball. Hobhouse hardly took time to say good-bye, and drove to Lord Dorset's. He had just returned from a visit to America, but Geordie was not with him.

Dorset was horrified that the affair between Geordie and his wife had been driven so far into the open. He held Hobby fast at the door. "Why can't

the old Baron make up with her? Haven't you any influence? One always does make it up, my dear fellow. Under all circumstances." Hobby would gladly have punched his head for him. Yes! But then, did he want anything different? He hastily disentangled himself and drove once more to Geordie's lodgings.

"Is he here?" He saw the reply in Fletcher's face.

"Yes, sir. The master will come down at once."

"Thank God," groaned Hob, and it suddenly struck him as comical that he should be so much more excited over someone's else affairs than he had ever been over his own.

Geordie had returned in the night from Holland House, where he had not found the Hollands. In the morning, as he could not, for obvious reasons, go visit Augusta at her Princess', he went into Hyde Park to think over what was to be done about the affair with Bel. He had had no feasible ideas in the country. He had been prepared for anything. Only not for this.

It was beginning to go too far. Two of his acquaintances had already passed by without stopping when he greeted them. Geordie very rarely walked, he did not like to strain his foot too much. Perhaps the fellows had simply been surprised. He would see! At Hyde Park Corner he bought a paper. A quarter of an hour later he was sitting on a tree stump, on a grass plot, reading it.

He had returned to London without the faintest suspicion that the public had taken forcible possession of his private life. But what he read was sufficient to show him what that meant. Step by step he had done everything to shield his passion for Augusta, to save it, to secure it. He had restrained

himself, had half separated from her, had seen her so little that often for months he thought he would never see her again. He had done what he could to break down his longing for Augusta, but it simply drove him more powerfully to her. He had trembled and stormed in fury at the obstacles to his passion. And finally he had embarked on this marriage. And all he had put up with was—no use. Now there was this scandal, though certainly not the sort he had dreaded. But in the end it was the same thing. And suddenly he felt so fearful that he clung to the tree-stump on which he was sitting.

What if A were to be drawn into it? Everything went black before his eyes, but he pulled himself together again quickly. "No surrender," he thought, and stood up. Bel could not know anything. He strode almost firmly on the way home, looked Fletcher in the face, and went upstairs to change.

"How are you, Hobby?" he asked as he came down to the hall.

"Well, Geordie. You must sign this at once. I must return it to Lushington by four."

"By four?" Had Hobby gone crazy? Geordie read over the legal form, walking to the window and drumming on the glass with his free hand. "Why by four?" he asked, and kept his eyes fixed on Hobhouse's.

"Because Augusta was cut by a great many people last night."

Geordie let the paper drop. His arm sank slowly down as if the nerves had been paralyzed. His glance sought the clock on the table. Without a word he went over and wrote his name, standing. With the same sinister quietness he handed Hobhouse the paper.

While Geordie was writing, Hobby, who was fairly insane with nervousness, stood beside him, and rapped out the Cambridge march with his knuckles. "Thank God," he said to himself, as he went out with the paper. He glanced at his watch again. A quarter to four. "God grant that I can catch that damned lawyer before four o'clock. At five let him fall off his ridiculous nag, and, with luck, break his neck."

When Geordie was alone, he stood braced tensely in the middle of the room, as if he were at a ship's rail, trying to avoid an oncoming wave. He stared fixedly at one point in space.

When Bel had told him that day in the carriage that the child was coming, Geordie had been struck a blow that shattered all his nerves. Now he realized he had been struck a much harder blow.

He had been waiting for it. Now it had come. At the last moment he had seen it coming, as if out of fire, and knew that it would catch him square on the jaw, and fell him to the ground. Then it crashed. It was horrible, the way it shattered his whole nervous system.

One thing only was left for him to do. To leave A forever, in order to save her.

14.

FOR FOUR MONTHS

Geordie was to leave on Saturday. On Wednesday he wound up all his affairs in England.

He now owned only Newstead Abbey and the mines, which were still being contested. The lease on the Piccadilly house had been voided, and a new one taken over by people who also took over the furniture. All that Geordie wanted to keep was packed up, and sent to Newstead.

Fletcher had seen to the giving up of all subscriptions, the cancelling of all contracts for supplies, had sold the wine and superintended the packing of the books in water-tight bales. They were stored for the present but would follow Geordie later.

The two carriages had been taken by Hobby and Dorset. Geordie was literally traveling with two dogs and bare necessities. The horses were already in the stalls at Six Mile Bottom.

Geordie left Lady Melbourne's and went down the street on foot. She stood behind the curtain and watched him. At that moment Lady Melbourne despised Augusta from the bottom of her heart. There was Geordie going toward the corner of the street. If her feelings were to be trusted, she would never see him again, at least not for a great many years—and that girl had probably not even the ghost of an idea of the experience she had been through with her brother. But she, Lady Melbourne, with her pink complexion and white hair, had seen it in

him all the while, could even now see what he was feeling from his face, his hands, his voice.

How absurd it is that in this world equals never meet. Ah, had she encountered such a passion in her youth, she would have gone down into Hell for it. She let the curtain fall when Geordie had turned the corner, and passed through her boudoir into the billiard room. She shook her head. It did not please her even there. She went to the window again and stood behind the curtain.

"I am an old woman," she said, "it's not just the mirror."

At six o'clock Geordie reached home.

"Have you laid the table?" he asked Fletcher. "Good. And irises?"

"Yes, sir. At what hour shall I serve dinner?"

Geordie stared at a cobweb, hanging from the ceiling. "At eight."

"Very good," said Fletcher, and went out.

Thanks to Hobby's athletic training, Lushington had received Geordie's signature in plenty of time to state explicitly for the papers, in his client's name, that there was no question of a divorce from her husband. This was sufficient, for it gave all participants time to catch their breaths.

Geordie had intended to stay in the country with A until Saturday, and then cross to the Continent. But the children at Six Mile Bottom had been taken sick, and Augusta was going down to her estate that evening.

When Fletcher had gone out, Geordie went over to his desk, moved a few things, pulled open the drawers, and went up to his dressing room. Then he came down again and stationed himself by the steps. He wanted to see Augusta arrive for the

last time at this house. Hardly had he leaned against the wall and breathed in the deep summer fragrance of the garden, when she came up the path. She wore a white evening cloak with a little fur trimming, and carried her traveling cloak over her arm.

"Have you had any news of the children?" he asked, helping her off with her cloak.

"Nothing new," said A, tugging off her gloves. "The servants nearly always exaggerate. My kittens won't drown," she laughed, "even if it is high tide."

"Do you go to dinner right away?"

She took his arm and they went in together. Geordie felt that he wanted to count every step.

"Fletcher has been frightfully proper about the table," she said when she saw it. "Now he'll have to repack all the glasses tonight. Are you sending them to me or to Newstead?"

"You have enough to bear with the horses."

"Well, for four months," said A, "that's no time at all."

Geordie saw her teeth flash in her burning face. Her lips set them in a softly ironic frame. In the candlelight, the mirror behind her seemed to clothe her in a glittering coat of mail. Her oval head, her broad chin, and big, gray eyes . . . he laughed hoarsely, and impressed them on his mind.

After dinner she thought Geordie rather sleepy. "From packing," she guessed. "He had a firm head, even the nose was hard though it was thin."

"How long have you been parting your hair on the left?" she asked, surprised.

"Always have."

She pondered, and suddenly encountered Geordie's glance staring into space, where it seemed suspended. "All Geordie's power," she thought, "was

in those gray-green eyes." Even in the sunshine they had something of twilight in them, something hypnotic, something for which one would go to the devil, she thought, and felt a shudder run over her from head to foot. Always when she looked at him, her whole nature felt drawn towards him. But she did not show it.

"You're really a lucky person, Geordie. To go traveling down the Rhine. I've heard that there are still robber-barons there, but that's hardly possible."

"Nonsense," said Geordie.

"You are almost as polite as Hobby." They both had to laugh.

"Don't forget to have the garden-house, with the thatched roof, repaired," said Geordie, after a time, lighting a cigarette. At that moment he heard her carriage arrive. Two more minutes!

"It will last the four months you are away. Then you can see to the repairs yourself. Have you told them to put a few sandwiches into the carriage for me?"

He helped her into her cloak, her traveling cloak this time. He went out with her. He nearly fell down the steps.

"Ah, here's an old acquaintance," said A, and said 'good-day' to Geordie's carriage. As she made her little bow, a short, thin chain with a medallion fell from her neck. "Keep it, Geordie," she said. "One must never pick up anything that falls from one's person. Perhaps it will bring you luck. Adieu!"

"I hope it will," said Geordie, putting the medallion in his pocket. "Hobby has taken this carriage."

Geordie clasped her to him. After she had slipped into the carriage, he drew her again to him, as if his life were flowing out of him into her.

Long after all sound of the carriage was lost, he still stood there silent, feeling once more the blow he had first felt as he signed the separation from Bel. Now A was safe. Now he must disappear.

On Saturday he and Fletcher journeyed to Dover. They had a good crossing, though he could hardly breathe for sadness. Sometimes he could not understand how he managed to go on living.

15.

TWO WOMEN BY THE SEA

Miss Villiers was one of those Englishwomen who have lived a long time abroad, and, in spite of their good long legs, generally look as if they took morphine, yet who, once they marry, usually present the world with a half dozen football players. She was a girlhood friend of Augusta's, and quite intimate with Bel.

One day when Geordie had already been several months in Geneva she journeyed down to Kirby-by-the-Sea, to see Bel, for she had a feeling that Augusta was just about to travel on the Continent.

People had commented on the fact that Bel had not seen Augusta all this time, and Marjorie Villiers had felt obliged to say to Augusta one day, "In your place I should not appear so unconcerned about the way in which Bel left your brother. There are people who think it absurd."

In the course of their very candid conversation, Augusta discovered, to her horror, that there were persons who believed her estrangement from Bel to be due to very much the right reasons.

Geordie had not returned that autumn or winter. It was May again. Another scandal looming and Geordie not there.

"Are many people talking about it?" she asked.

"No, but if Bel cuts you again, there will be more."

"Why has Bel withdrawn herself so? A scandal hasn't nearly so many disadvantages for her as for me."

"It has its disadvantages," said Marjorie Villiers, "but they are not the same."

"If Geordie doesn't come back by June," said Augusta, "I may go to Italy to see him." She departed, leaving Miss Villiers with the feeling that this plan of hers must be prevented, unless one preferred to poison Augusta outright.

Since Bel was involved in the affair, and since she was fond of Bel, she journeyed, with the disagreeable, but rousing, consciousness of standing between two parties in a terrible conflict, to Kirby-by-the-Sea.

She sat on the terrace and, for twenty minutes, her pale blue eyes watched Bel, strolling up and down the beach not fifty yards from her. Although she had sent down her card, Bel made no attempt to come up to her, which angered Marjorie Villiers very much, for they were within easy speaking distance of one another all the time.

She began to manicure her nails. "I will wait another quarter of an hour," she thought. "Perhaps Bel has become a little mad."

Shortly afterwards, Bel came affably up to her, and she could have her say. Bel listened quietly.

Miss Villiers was deeply influenced by the fact that the woman sitting opposite her was still beautiful, though frightfully bitter. Not a muscle moved in her face, the upper part of which, eyes, forehead and temples, was still charming, though the mouth, lined with suffering, was cold and unfeeling.

"Mr. Lushington is arriving this afternoon. If it's agreeable to you, we can talk it over with him," she said finally. Miss Villiers saw that Bel tried to smile, but without success.

Having made his toilet, Lushington went to Bel's boudoir where they had tea alone together.

"Of course, that fool must not go to Italy," said the lawyer, while, deep in thought, he crumbled a biscuit into bits. "If by any chance she shouldn't come back, everything we've done will have been futile."

"I thought of that also. I want this scandal to stop definitely, and I want all possibility of further scandals rooted out. My child must be cleansed forever of the traces of her father's incest. You must find something, Lush, that will separate Augusta and Geordie forever."

Lushington saw the slight shudder when she mentioned Geordie's name. She had no more feeling for the man.

"You always say, '*You* must' . . ." said Lushington, with his soft, sceptical laugh. Deep down in his heart he admired this woman.

"So far you have always proved that *you* can," said Bel.

Well, yes, that was true. And she herself always knew exactly what must be done. Poor woman! She spoke with a coldness that did not conceal from Lushington how much she had suffered. He went down to Majorie Villiers.

She was sitting with Colonel Doyle, Bel's uncle, to whom Kirkby belonged. An older man than Lush, with a white moustache combed downwards, and a red, military face. But he could only rise from his chair with the aid of his cane. He had never bothered much about Bel's family; Lord Noel got on his nerves. But when he heard of Bel's misfortune, he had immediately invited the young woman to come stay with him. He was one of those persons who are never interested in other people until they get into trouble. His friendliness to Bel was so

great that he often became a nuisance. Of course he would hear nothing of a reconciliation with Augusta, and Marjorie Villiers tried in vain to shield Augusta from his attacks. To Doyle the whole family were scoundrels.

"Is there anything, Miss Villiers," asked Lushington, when he was seated, "that will shake Mrs. Leigh's faith in her brother?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"It is, I suspect, the only possible way of working on Mrs. Leigh's feelings."

"I will think it over," answered Marjorie Villiers.

That night in bed she considered the lawyer's question pro and con. When she came down to Kirkby she had not imagined for a moment that there was anything in the scandal. But here she found a wall of silence which told her everything. Lush and Bel, at least, were firmly convinced that Augusta and Geordie. . . . She was horrified, but hers was a brave nature. Though she had not led a wayward life, she had seen enough to be able to think about such things in the way people who are about to declare war, think of war.

When she had spoken to Augusta about the rumors afloat (it had not been more than twice) Augusta had answered with a scorn that sounded like absolute impregnability. Either she was innocent, or she knew definitely that there were no proofs. But how did it happen that so prudent a woman and so good a lawyer, though silent, were yet as certain of their case as Bel and Lushington? It was impossible without proof. "In that case," said Marjorie Villiers to herself, "the proofs must be of such nature that they cannot be brought forward."

That much she could fathom. But what next?

If she, Marjorie Villiers, who had lived in the tropics and, consequently, knew how hard it goes with anyone who falls from grace in society, could prevent Augusta Leigh from going to Italy, it would be an act of friendship—to both sides. She continued to brood over it until the rays of the morning sun fell across her bed.

She had breakfast brought up to her on her little balcony. And there an idea came to her. Augusta had always laughingly averred that if such a rumor were going round, it must be spread by Caroline Lamb or other enemies of Geordie. Oddly enough, Caroline was not one of the chief shouters. While the rest of the world was in full cry, she remained silent for reasons which Miss Villiers did not understand.

It occurred to Marjorie that Augusta was very sure of her cause. She anticipated all things from enemies who, to a great extent, were taking no part in this hunt at all.

And another idea came to her, which she imparted to Lushington when she met him on the terrace.

"You asked me yesterday if there was any point on which Mrs. Leigh could be hit, or rather say, disillusioned, about her brother, did you not?"

"Certainly. That is what I wanted to know," answered Lushington, and turned his thumbs in as though he felt the reins of his sheep-like steed between them.

"There *is* one point, I think. But you will have to provide the proofs in connection with it."

"I can certainly do that, if there are any," said Lushington, with an elderly lawyer's smile. "What may it be?" he asked, and, cup in hand, lifted his

fine head, with its short, white beard. "What women can't manage to patch together!" he thought, and waited intently.

"Mrs. Leigh must be convinced that the rumors about her were not started by her personal enemies, but that people very near to her were not discreet enough."

For a moment Lushington did not quite understand.

"Ah, yes! . . . You mean . . . Hm!" In his mind he went over all Geordie's closest friends. And their friends, business, mistresses, law-suits and lawyers. It was not a very clean business that this young woman was suggesting.

"Thank you very much indeed," he said.

"Everybody has some vulnerable point," he thought meditatively. "And women have an amazing instinct for discovering it. If Miss Villiers is right, Augusta Leigh, who lives in incest with her brother without so much as fluttering an eyelash, will break with him because she will not be able to bear the thought that he has been indiscreet. I have never yet met anybody," he thought, the lawyer in him again displacing the psychologist, "who has not, in his most important affairs, committed at least one indiscretion." He got up to take his leave.

At Hyde Park Corner the next morning, he met Lord Clare's lawyer. The man's name was Richmond, and he was celebrated in his profession. Lushington rather despised him, though only on the quiet, because he rode an animal somewhat like a mule.

Lushington greeted him, turned and overtook him at a few paces. "Hello, Richmond," he said as they

rode side by side. "Can you let me have the Clare-Hampshire-Plee documents?"

The two firms often acted for the same clients, though there was no question of that in this case. Richmond thought, should an opportunity arise, that Lushington might send him along something considerable, a big case, perhaps, from which he might get not a mere sixth, but possibly three-quarters.

"If it will be doing you a favor."

"I need it privately, and it is only a matter of information which will not come into Court."

Clare was abroad—a week later Lushington was in possession of a letter from his correspondence. Richmond's firm, as his lawyers, had asked his secretary for all his correspondence of the last two years, in order to answer inquiries, and some of Geordie's letters were included, because, in the opinion of Clare's secretary, they were not entirely of a private nature. Clare had often done business in which Geordie was interested, and they had asked one another's advice about leases and law-suits.

Geordie's letter, as Lushington admitted to himself, was not quite clear. But Geordie hinted to Clare of his situation. To those who knew, it was enough. To the Law, nothing. But it was not a question of the Law this time. Lushington was satisfied, at any rate, and wrote Bel the results.

"Not quite fair," he thought as he stowed the Clare letter in his drawer, intending to borrow it for a week. But would it not help all these people?

"Take these papers back to Richmond," he said to the clerk who entered.

The next day Bel's card was brought him, and he gave orders for her to be shown in at once.

"Good-day," she said coldly as she sat down. "As a result of your letter I have invited Augusta to come to Kirkby tomorrow. Is that satisfactory to you?"

"That was too quick," thought Lush, looking up his engagements.

"It is difficult, but I'll manage it."

"Thanks, Lush. Then I should like to draw up another statement."

The lawyer rang for his secretary.

"You'll have to write it yourself, Lush. I can't use witnesses."

To Lushington's astonishment, she dictated a statement to the effect that it should not in future be said, when the relations between her husband and Mrs. Leigh were under discussion, that she had no right to censure Mrs. Leigh, although she had in the meantime been on friendly terms with her, and had invited her to Kirkby. She had done so, despite the strong censure she had to make of Mrs. Leigh, solely in order to remove any possibility of open scandal which might damage her child's future. She had done so purely as a matter of policy, as a means to an end, and, lastly, because a certain amount of pity was due Mrs. Leigh, who, in her opinion, was, in this matter, more the victim than the culprit.

"I do not want to let go all my weapons for fear that my—that Lord Byron may some day demand his daughter," said Bel, as Lushington laid down his pen.

"Sign here," he said.

As Bel bent over he saw her mouth. It looked frozen in her beautiful, and not yet fully matured, face. He marveled at the acuteness with which she picked her way, and regretted that so much talent should be so abruptly checked. But in the forty-five

years during which he had handled destinies in high society, he had seen too much to spend more than a dreamy after-thought on Bel, once he had shaken her hand and seen her to the door. New documents. New cases. So it went on always.

Tomorrow afternoon he would not be able to ride in Hyde Park because he would have to be in Kirkby, with a certain letter in his pocket, the possession of which would have weighed heavily on his soul, but for the memory of Bel's face. By God, it really wasn't quite 'fair'—but then, was God always 'fair?' He rang for the next client.

It was misty as Augusta drove to Kirkby the next morning. Just as she saw the sea in the distance, the sun broke through. The water foamed warm on the sand. Far out white-winged sailing boats suddenly appeared. The blue of sky and water was so strong that she closed her eyes quickly and as quickly opened them again, which made her look as if she were laughing.

She handed in her card, and before she could cross the hall, Bel was beside her, taking her arm and walking with her down the terrace steps, across the sands and along the water's edge.

The waves had little white crests and the sea thundered softly.

"Augusta," said Bel in a quiet voice, "I have no right to make accusations against you. And I don't want to do so. Your life before my marriage is of no interest to me or mine. And that you gave me no cause, during my married life, to be angry with you, I take for granted and will not speak about, though there are facts which accuse you. Do not interrupt me. We both have to go on living, and we are bound to each other by the past—inextricably,

it often seems to me—even though, to me, that past is hateful. Believe me, I would gladly break with it, if I could. But I cannot. But, as far as the future is concerned, Augusta, if we wish to come to an understanding, and it is to your interest, as you know—I must make demands upon you to which you must agree."

Towards the end, Bel had stood still. Augusta looked at her with her impenetrable gray eyes. She thought Bel dreadfully stern, and hence a little funny. So they wanted her here to torment her about Geordie.

"Maybe I'll cross to Ostend tomorrow," she thought.

"I don't understand you, Bel," she said, digging a mussel out of the sand with her toe.

"Shall I speak more plainly?" asked Bel. How hard Bel's face had become. It came to Augusta in a flash that she was talking to someone who had difficulty in not betraying how terribly shattered she was. Very well, let the reason for her journey be duly brought forth.

"What is it you are demanding, Bel?"

"You must not see Geordie again."

"And in return you will invite me to your daughter's christening?" said Augusta ironically. So this woman wanted to cut off her life. "Are you mad?" she cried, and took a step backwards, as though she clasped something that she did not want to let escape her. She felt the mussel shells crunch under her feet. Her face grew set and fiery red, while the corners of her mouth turned up, as they always did when she was angry, which gave her an amused expression that made Bel furious.

"What do you mean by that?" Bel turned on her.

"If anybody is mad, it is not I, though I had a madman for a husband."

For a moment Augusta considered whether she should go. What was she doing with this woman whose face she could not recognize? Was this the deer she had helped in its bitterest hour?

"But did you not love him?" asked Augusta, so beside herself that she spoke in a whisper. She could hardly hear herself.

"I did. But I don't think of it any longer. And you? Did not you love him also? But you forget that he has brought misfortune on us both."

"Geordie?" The woman was crazy. Geordie bring misfortune on her? She herself had determined to have Geordie from the first moment she saw him, with the greyhounds, by the yew hedge. "You don't know what you are saying, Bel."

But Bel, contrary to expectations, was calm.

"I will prove it to you, Augusta. I have already told you my conditions. You must not go to Italy to Geordie. You must adjust matters accordingly. And now, if you will go up to the house, Lush will give you definite proof that Geordie did not spare you, either. I'll stay here, for I will have nothing to do with it. But when you are up there, remember that I mean well by you, and have never had any other desire."

Calmly Bel watched Augusta go up to Lushington in whose hand she herself had placed the weapon. For her child!

Augusta always bent slightly at the knees as she walked, quite charming in a mannish way,—but this time they seemed to bend deeper as she mounted the steps, feeling that a knife was about to be plunged into her heart.

When Augusta drove home, towards evening, she was somewhat paler. Bel had aimed a heavy blow at her. Nothing, Augusta felt, would ever again be so easy, so happy, so childish as it had been before that conversation. Her whole past life already appeared to her as a dream. That she had ridden over the fields at Six Mile Bottom, that she had fished at Newstead, the races she had attended, her Princess' trains which she had taken care of, the cherries she and the children had shaken from the trees, the balls she had attended at St. James', Christmas and the sunshine at Whitsun, the scent of lilacs in Piccadilly, the sailing party at Torquay at her confirmation . . . all that lay like a melancholy memory behind her.

Would she grow old now? What more was to come? A cold shiver ran down her spine. "Please, please, not older," she thought, and laughed. She would never be different from what she was, what she was at that moment. Something now lay between them, between Geordie and her, between her life and her . . . ah, between everything and her happiness. And she could not get over it. Why couldn't she? It was only a trifle, after all!

She suddenly remembered how that day at Holland House, when they had watched the cat catching a goldfish in the pool, Geordie had told her about Lady Oxford, and how she had not been able to get over that either. Surely Geordie had no idea of the letter which that horrible old man had shown her. It was a good trick. She saw through the manoeuvre. Bel's stroke.

But when, from her carriage, she saw the sun's last fire extinguished in the sea, she knew that she would not go to Ostend. Not because she ought

not, but because she could not now. Why did not Geordie come? Why? Why?

Lushington, who left for London five minutes later, felt the letter in his pocket as he put away his gloves. Which of the two women had won, he wondered. Without that letter, Mrs. Leigh could not have been brought to her knees. And the way she had taken it! Smiling, while her eyelids quivered. She certainly felt no remorse. And guilt? Lushington's lips curled under his thin white moustache. Was there such a thing? He had too often doubted it. This woman certainly felt nothing of it. Vital as a fish. With eyes that averted everything which might destroy her naive world. One who was, in her own sight, always innocent.

He had read in her eyes what she thought. She had never hurt anybody, never taken anything from anybody—what did they want of her? Her psychology functioned exactly as her body and her passion functioned, without disruptive ideas. An unusual type. He was sorry that he had planted a seed of that scepticism, which was his strength, in this harmonious nature. What would be the result? At any rate, that *had* been her vulnerable point, and his own part in the business was well done.

With a slight smile of satisfaction, from the lawyer in him, Lushington laid his head against the cushions to snatch a little sleep. It was obvious that he had not ridden that day.

Augusta, who had driven faster, already saw the lights of London gleam. They danced and flitted before her like a swarm of shining midges in the air. "Geordie," thought Augusta, as the summer night swept over her face, with the scent of jasmine and roses from the mansions. She loved him, as ever,

unspeakably, to the death. Even Geordie himself could not take that from her. She loved him as she breathed, as she trembled, as she felt him, even now, sitting alone in the carriage. And if he were dead, she would still love him. It was part of her, as her heart was part of her. What could one do about it? Go to him on the Continent—the old man with his letter had killed that in her. And had Geordie ever really wished it?

"He never wrote anything definite about it," she thought as she went up the steps of St. James', returning to the life of her nice, helpless Princess, who could not get through her many balls without her.

Letters came and went. From London. From Six Mile Bottom. Letters like those she wrote when she was carrying the child. Bells ringing! Crosses! Stars! Pistol shots! Letters to make one insane! When would she come? When would he come? . . . And she dared not set a time. Yes, if Geordie had appeared at Calais, she would have run on foot to Dover. His eyes! Foam in the wind!—that was what everything else amounted to. But he only wrote letters, and she set no time.

Meanwhile she went to the christening of Bel and Geordie's daughter. Bel and Augusta kissed afterwards.

"Brunhild and Kriemhild," thought Lushington, who was sitting in the church. They passed him arm in arm. The lawyer thought with satisfaction that a certain letter had long been safely back amongst the Clare-Hampshire-Plee documents. The world rolled on. He rose, bowed over Bel's hands, and offered his congratulations.

In October Augusta received a letter from which she gathered that Geordie intended to spend Christ-

mas at Six Mile Bottom. How nice! But what would Bel say to it? Absurd! They had now been together five or six times. After all Geordie was her brother. Pipin!—as he wrote, with a cross after it. Pipin! She closed her eyes, and in her excitement, took out her watch and and wound it.

"Well, about that letter—he won't have anything to laugh over," she thought, "the—Pup."

But she was to have peace. Geordie did not come at Christmas. Then Christmas came again. And again he was not there.

Part III

THE PASSIONATE REBEL

I.

PAPA'S IN THE OPPOSITION

The Palazzo Albrizzi did not face the Canal, but, like so many of the most beautiful palaces in Venice, stood on a tiny square in the midst of a barely penetrable maze of narrow alleys.

In spite of its unpretentious front, it was a very costly house. It had not a piece too much of furnishing, but everything in it, its porcelains; its bronzes; the silence bestowed by its many carpets; its gold, green and silver tapestries; its Boule furniture; its vast beds; its Guardis, Carpaccios, and Bellinis; its portraits by Tintoretto; its angels, negroes and warriors, by Tiepolo, covering the ceilings; its many lamps and bowls from Murano; its dim mirrors—all had more purpose and taste, tradition and intimacy, than can ordinarily be shown together at one time by most English houses.

In the gloomy entrance-hall, which was flagged, and from which a steep, narrow staircase, designed by Michelozzo, led to the first floor, a glass lantern was hanging.

Geordie stood in front of this lantern one evening, as he was about to go to the two ladies upstairs, and considered it long and attentively. Not only was it three times the height of a man, but it, too, must date from Michelozzo's time. Some otherwise forgotten Albrizzi, when Doge, had had it at the prow of his war galley.

"Remarkable," thought Geordie, "that that fine, fragile, opaque glass has lasted so long." So much

had happened in the interim—Wars . . . rebellions. . . . There must always have been a strong hand in this house. And yet the Albrizzis had changed ideas exactly as they changed fashions. He pondered. A short time ago, and the Albrizzis had viewed the pell-mell confusion of all Italy like hunting-dogs with game. . . . And now the two delightful ladies, whom he was on his way to visit, were, as their dead brother had been, fairly rabid about 'United Italy.' It was the same in most of the big houses. Ah, well, history was constantly revolving.

Geordie tried to make a mark with his finger on the glass. Really, when one stopped to think that this dreamy provincial town had once ruled half the world . . . and that Ravenna, which now lay six miles inland, was once a city of millions and a great naval base . . . exactly like Bruges . . . ! Of course, it was only the force of certain definite ideas, which raised a town to importance and then let it fall again,—not, as people believed, some kind of destiny. It was always some new form of liberty that was so eagerly sought for. But it was always the old love of liberty which struggled for new embodiment. "Against some form of oppression, from without, from within," thought Geordie, "or in itself." He laughed a little.

He heard the door behind him open. During the three years he had lived in Venice, he had interested himself more and more in political questions, of which there was really a surplus here. There was hardly another country ruled so crazily by foreign generals and local tyrants. He thought for a moment of England. Though he hated England, he had to own that he had no fault to find with its

government, apart from its system of social discriminations.

He suddenly remembered, as he went upstairs, how as a youth on his first visit to Albania, he had tried to make clear to a Turkish governor the advantages of the English system of government, and the astonishing effects of that conversation. He had just written the first part of Childe Harold. Now the fourth part was finished, and that part of his life finished with it.

"Would you like to meet the young Signora Gamba? She is anxious to meet you," said Julia Albrizzi as he bent over her hand. She was receiving, in the green room, for her sister who was ill. She was one of those dim beauties such as Longhi, in contrast to Titian, loved to paint; with a complexion rather brown than pink, and with an inner vivacity hardly revealed by her languorous movements. She had blue eyes, and looked older than her age, which was forty.

"I would rather spare the young lady my cold," said Geordie, his handkerchief to his nose.

Julia Albrizzi threatened him with her finger. "Then I shall catch it. You are to sit next me at table." She had to turn to a new arrival. Geordie went on. He really felt he had caught a cold in his head, and could not get enough air, so that he gladly avoided the labor entailed by a young woman who wants to make a man's acquaintance.

Julia Albrizzi was inclined to rave a little about Geordie. Ordinarily she did not care much for Englishmen. But he affected her as an Italian would. Her brother had pointed him out to her as a man of the greatest significance, whose books contained living ideas. To which she could have added

something for herself: she could picture him brushing his teeth every morning, without feeling that it was comical.

She watched him as he disappeared in the adjoining salon. "Probably," she thought, "he is in love." There was hardly any other condition in which she could imagine her acquaintances, and anything she could not immediately understand, she ascribed to that. The thought kept teasing her the whole evening, though she soon perceived that in reality Geordie was trying to throw off a cold.

Grateful that Julia did not demand too much conversation from him, Geordie gave her great pleasure by twice making mistakes in Italian, which he usually spoke well. She loved to be able to correct people.

Suddenly Geordie felt that some one was staring at him, and, glancing up, found himself looking into the eyes of a blonde girl who sat opposite him. She dropped her lids just a second too late.

"Surely I must know you," he said, feeling certain that he had seen her before. But he quickly perceived that he was mistaken. "No, I don't know you after all."

"Quite right," she said sarcastically. "You did not even want to say 'How do you do' to me."

So that was who it was.

"It was a mistake," confessed Geordie. Julia Albrizzi rose from the table.

"I am dead tired," the girl assured him as he took two steps round the corner of the table to her. "In Ravenna no one eats as stupidly late as this."

"But doesn't Count Gamba live in Venice?"

"Of course," she said, "but I've married Guiccioli."

"Julia Albrizzi forgot to tell me that."

She laughed softly. "Papa's in the Opposition. That probably seemed more interesting to her."

They looked at one another, and both laughed.

"My husband is not here. He isn't very well. Where are you living?"

"In Mocenigo."

"Oh, I know so little of Venice," she said, downcast.

"If you are staying here much longer, I hope you and your husband will come visit me." She was taken for the dance, and all down the long room, she gazed at him over an officer's shoulder.

"It's weird how much she resembles Augusta," thought Geordie, sitting behind a screen, painted with skating scenes, quite a decent piece of work from the early nineteenth century, a little too Chinese, though the skaters were quite realistically Austrian. The thought of the resemblance did not excite him very much, rather, it soothed something in him. He felt an indefinable tenderness for this young girl, who looked at him as though at first glance she trusted him unqualifiedly with all that of which she was mistress, her body and her soul. She had very black eyes, yet the resemblance was striking. She was simply Augusta translated into Italian.

A year ago this encounter would have driven him frantic. He thought of how he had hung about Milan for a month in the hope of obtaining, by bribery, a really ridiculous scrap of hair from the head of Lucretia Borgia, who had been notoriously in love with her brother.

At that time he viewed everything under the influence of his passion for Augusta, and kept alive by means of associations which were certainly no longer normal. Those letters! The never being

able to speak! The never-ending policy of keeping Augusta from realizing that he had no intention of returning to England! The excuses for deferring, at the last moment, the visit to Italy which he was constantly proposing to her. And all the time the consciousness that life had grown colorless, senseless, a burden to him. He had really lost everything, losing her.

If he had not written 'Manfred' he could not have borne it longer. Remarkable, how one can liberate one's self through work. It had been a great revelation to him. One morning, as he was looking out his window, he saw the towers of Frari, the domes of the Salute, the hundred Gothic window-arches of the Palazzo Foscari, flashing as though new-built, on the far side of the Canal. He had just finished Manfred—ah, even the crab-fishers, rowing by below, seemed to him like Bellini's saints.

Of course, he did not love Augusta less. She had become completely part of him, together with the destiny which he himself had enjoined upon her. From the moment he put his passion for his sister out of his mind, his frenzy had ended; he rebelled no longer. A melancholy remained, but it was serene.

Except for this secret background of passion for Augusta, nothing remained to him of all he had been through in late years. "In the end," he thought, "there remained hardly a connecting thread between the life he led and what he really felt." Even Hobby had not noticed it, when he visited him the previous year. "He probably thinks I keep a harem." Geordie smiled, remembering what had happened then.

Hobby had little sympathy with the Italian char-

acter: he was slovenly, but not frivolous. To him the Italians were more or less 'natives,' like the Indians. He had approved when Lord Elgin lugged the Parthenon frieze off to London, the most disgusting robbery for which an English gentleman would ever have to answer at the judgment bar of history. . . . Geordie's thoughts were interrupted at that point by his cold. He always had to sneeze five or six times, once he began.

Down in the entrance hall he stopped before the Albrizzi lamp. He remembered quite well the afternoon when he had first stood before it. Since then he always had a loving predilection for it.

It was there that the idea for his Don Juan had come to him. Until then he had worked differently . . . things had just come of themselves, at intervals; he felt now that at bottom his figures all somewhat resembled one another. They were all revolutionaries, sentimental criminals, magnanimous heroes—a little purposeless in their valor.

That day he had gone in his gondola from Giovanni è Paolo through a maze of evil-smelling canals, to the Rialto, where he got out and crossed the Bridge to the other bank. Walking along the canals, he came to the quay which led to the Giudecca. The sky was as blue as the water, and soft; the doves were cooing. The yellow and greenish houses, on the islands, stood out incredible, winged. He went to the point at the Salute and had himself rowed across.

As he reached the colonnade of the Piazza San Marco, his new characters came to meet him. As though from the roof of the Doge's palace, or the Palazzo Reale opposite—but actually on the Piazetta opposite the Lagoon, the idea came to him to write

Don Juan as if it were a Faust. What ideas this figure could give life to. . . . Here he had a hero who not only rebelled, but was sceptical and yet struggled. This plan, which overwhelmed him, would require a whole life-time.

That day, too, he had stood by the lantern in the hall of the Albrizzi's. It told him clearly enough how short a life-time is. Of what did it consist? A tiny fragment of history.

And gazing at the century-old shape of glass and iron, he had begun to think out the method by which he could achieve so great a work.

It struck him, at the time, how differently he now set about his work. It mastered him completely. Through the experience with Augusta, he had had to suffer terrible grief, and hence he now observed life more exactly from the viewpoint of cause and effect. Sometimes he even asked himself if it were sufficient that one should write.

Now as he stood, his nose inflamed with sneezing, before the Murano glass lantern, the contradiction between his life, as it probably appeared to others, and as it really was, struck him with peculiar force. To outsiders, he thought, his life must seem a wildly extravagant thing; for a hysterical girl had jumped into the canal in front of the Mocenigo, where it was impossible to drown even a dog, and there had lived in his house, for a time, a charming person, who used to haggle with Fletcher over every head of lettuce, from bed each morning.

How laughable! He had sacrificed his whole life —and what one saw for it was nothing at all. Yes, and the more people thought they saw, the less that was really part of him. By God, he actually kept alive on nothing but resignation and work, though

he had taught the whole world the idea of liberty, and though the whole world went on believing his life was lived in a rebellion of feeling against society, like that of which he had written. Of course they pictured it as 'dissolute.' Fools! He had no life apart from his writings. And again, confronting the lantern from the prow of the Albrizzi galley, he asked himself: "Was that enough?"

But the draught which came from the garden made him remember his cold, and he went quickly to the canal and had himself ferried over.

Though he had told the Countess Guiccioli that she should let him know when she was coming, she and her husband arrived unannounced from the Palazzo Albrizzi, via eight small canals to the Grand Canal, and along it until they saw in the bend, on the left, the Palazzo Foscari. On the right hand bank of the Canal were a number of elegant, low palazzi.

"Which?" asked the gondolier in the prow.

"The third."

The Mocenigos had four houses, standing in a row along the Canal. Geordie had rented one of them.

As the Guicciolis had come into the canal from the left, they were rowed straight across it. Therese saw the stairs reflected on the water like a shell with five flutings. Above them, like a basket of flowers, hung a small iron balcony, tilted upwards. The third floor must be for the servants, and was roofed with tiles. Two domes and four low chimneys gave the rather simple finishing touches to the house. On the facade, lions' heads, with coats of arms, hung over the window, between which a delicate green climbing plant was growing.

"No, Lord B is not here," said the gondolier who

opened the bronze door. "He has gone to the Lido where he keeps his horses. But if you would like to come in, he will surely be back in a few minutes."

Therese looked at her husband. As long as they were there . . . He nodded his head imperceptibly. Really, the Albrizzi might have come, too. To make matters worse, he had some difficulty getting out of the gondola, and with muttered curses entered the house.

"Be careful," whispered the gondolier, pointing, on the dark marble staircase that led from the flagged hall to the living rooms, to a pair of greenish eyes which he drove back into the recesses with a loud shout. Rather tremulously, Therese Guiccioli passed a couple of huge dogs. A moment later she felt something dash past her in the dark, and then return.

"Is that a monkey?" asked Guiccioli angrily.

"A positive circus."

"There is a bear in the garden, too," said the servant. "They're always destroying things. The English servant says they spoil the works of art. At first I thought I wouldn't stay. But then came the affair with the sword-cane."

"What was that?" asked Therese curiously. They were now in the room with the balcony overlooking the canal.

To Therese, Geordie was something indefinable, even before she met him; judging by his books, something powerful. She could quote almost anything from them. She cast a glance at her husband, who, with his bald head shrunk between his shoulders, stood uncomfortable and irritated to find himself there.

"The business with the sword-cane?" said the

gondolier, who had stopped, somewhat embarrassed, by the door. "I didn't know there were such things. We were caught in a thunder-storm, and my master took his cane, which I was carrying, because he did not want me to be in danger from the storm. Of course, I didn't know there was a stiletto screwed inside."

"We will wait here," said Guiccioli, annoyed by the chatter. "This ought to be him," he said from the balcony.

Therese stood, deep in thought, in the middle of the room. Really, it was very nice—that business of the cane. She had been a little disappointed, yesterday evening, to find that the white-skinned athlete, who sat opposite her, ate nothing but tea, eggs and milk.

She turned round. What was Guiccioli doing? Just at the moment that the Englishman was coming upstairs, he had one of his attacks. By the time Geordie entered the room, the old man was writhing like an electric eel.

"How nice. And unannounced," said Geordie reproachfully. He turned to her husband and could hardly believe his eyes. He had never seen Guiccioli before, and though he might not have been prepared for anything very exceptional, he had not expected to meet an old man. He looked like the bust of Socrates at Harrow, and Geordie immediately appraised him at twelve estates of five thousand acres each. Otherwise, he thought, the Gambas would not have sold their child.

These Italians were idealistic scoundrels. They went serenely bankrupt for a national revolution, and traded their daughters to a skeleton. "As in certain books," thought Geordie, as he showed

round Guiccioli, who was no longer writhing. A disgusting creature, this man!

The Count was principally interested in the fact that Geordie had laid out so much money on a palace he had only rented. In his opinion it was money thrown away. Eventually he would have to leave it again. All his life Guiccioli had thought of nothing but getting richer, so that the mortifications his ugliness brought on him might be met with the contempt which enormous wealth allowed. Well, he had been thoroughly successful in doing so. Would this inspection, which did not interest him in the least, soon be over?

"How is your cold?" asked Therese.

"Gone, thank you," said Geordie, and opened the door into the garden.

"You are rather nervous, I think."

"Frightfully," he said, "when I need to have a clear head the next day. Have you seen the bears?"

"I think your animals are terrible," she said, wrinkling her eyebrows.

"Oh!" Geordie laughed.

She was deeply disillusioned. "I really thought that you walked in the woods with your hands behind your back." She remembered that Petrarch and Dante had done that, but she was annoyed with herself for having said it.

"And never had colds?"

"Yes," she said, laughing herself, "or, at the most, horses."

"Why?"

She hesitated a moment. "They suit you better," she said, and blushed.

Geordie preceded them down the stairs. Guiccioli was a very old man, and therefore noticed every-

thing minutely. He was now certain of what he had at first only suspected, that Geordie was lame. It gave him great satisfaction that this handsome man had such a defect. So he regarded Geordie as having a certain bond of union with him, as they shook hands.

"When, in return, you want to see a house in Ravenna," he said curtly, for he felt he was beginning to shiver, "come and see us." Supporting himself on the gondolier's hand, he went quickly down the gangway, and, shaken by that cold inner frost, sank back on the cushions.

"Yes, do come," said Therese, with fluttering eyelids. She still stood close beside him on the steps.

"For your sake?"

She made an impudent face at him, but went quite pale in doing so. He looked at her. She was frightfully nice, and, on the whole, was like Augusta to a degree he had never felt in any one else before. He returned her disconcerted, yet controlled, look. They had to remain standing side by side for another minute or so, until Guiccioli's shivering fit was over.

"Horrible," thought Geordie. "Go to Ravenna?" He had no such intention.

But a month later he was led to her bedside, in Ravenna: she had too heavy a cold to be able to receive him anywhere else.

2.

DANGEROUS? NOT FOR ME

"How are you?" she asked in a terribly hoarse voice. "You are to have three big rooms in the left wing. Are you traveling with your whole menagerie?"

He shook his head and thought of her little letters, full of girlish cleverness and covert passion. Always, when she was in danger of forgetting herself, that ironical tone appeared.

"What a pity!" she whispered. "I had pictured your moving in so comically."

As she could not manage to utter another word, Geordie left her and went to dress for dinner with Guiccioli, old Count Gamba and Therese's brother, Silvio.

"Therese wanted to write yesterday evening and put you off," said Guiccioli, "and if she had not had such a high temperature, she probably would have. We can congratulate ourselves that you have come, for her fever has fallen since morning. I hope you will stay a long time."

"Perhaps I can work here."

"We have quite acceptable horses, too," said Guiccioli. "If Therese had not suddenly taken it into her head to go riding, she would be dining with us today."

"Hasn't Therese been riding?" asked Silvio, who was only there on a visit, and knew nothing of the life of the house.

"Since her marriage, your sister has not been on horse-back," said Guiccioli coldly. "It's only since

we returned that she's gone back to it. And of course—in all kinds of weather. . . ."

"She used to ride very nicely," said old Gamba, who felt that he must come to his daughter's defense. He had a neat Henri IV beard on his narrow face. "I think it is time to go." He turned to his son who was traveling to Naples that night. They took their leave.

"Tomorrow morning I will show you the house," said Guiccioli to Geordie. "Do exactly as you are in the habit of doing. You need never come to meals, though naturally it will be a pleasure for me to have you. Good night."

A fortnight later Therese was so much improved, that she was able to ride with Geordie through the little pine woods in which she had once pictured him as walking with his hands behind his back. The poet failed quite signally to act up to specifications, for he began to gallop. But his riding, she thought, was divine. Geordie gazed after her as she suddenly galloped out into the dusty white plain. Dreadfully heedless! She sat in the saddle like a child, laden with a hundred-weight of dignity, like those babes whom the Spanish painters depicted in queenly attitudes on horseback. He could not help laughing.

Yet Therese was clever. To his surprise it did not displease him that she was so taken up with literature. Therese hardly ever said anything really silly or affected. And while she loved to jest, she could maintain a very proper distance.

In the sunlight she was almost pale blond. With her dark skin and eyes, this added a singular charm. "A strange mixture of intelligence and instinct," he reflected. At the same time, neither her culture nor her childishness was quite perfect.

She was returning in the midst of a cloud of white dust. No, she did not ride especially well, but it looked nice. And he took in at one glance this girl whose devotion was held so completely in readiness for him, as she sat her horse, pretending that no such things as aching muscles existed.

Two days later she said at table, "You will have to eat alone with me. Guiccioli went to Ferrara this morning and won't be back until mid-day tomorrow."

"Then you must go early to bed tonight," said Geordie.

Perhaps his tone offended her, perhaps she had expected something different, at any rate the tears rose to her eyes. But she kept them back. Her instinct told her almost immediately that Geordie had not quite been listening to her, and was thinking of something entirely different. He was nearly always somewhat absent-minded, even when he looked pleased and praised the eggs.

She swallowed a few times and really succeeded in choking down her tears.

"May I take care of your boxes of books?" she asked as she rose. "I do so love unpacking."

"That would be frightfully nice," said Geordie, and got up to look for an ash tray.

"Are we riding at six?"

"Of course."

By mid-day Geordie found his library arranged. A clever hand had assembled the books in a practical way, and yet with a sure feeling for his taste. There were only about two hundred volumes altogether, which had either been sent after him, or which he had brought, or borrowed from the library.

To his surprise, he saw on the table the first

French edition of the first part of Don Juan, on which he was constantly at work. It must have been in the package which had been sent on to him, and which he had not unwrapped. Therese had laid it open at the title page. "Very pretty," he thought, "very nice."

Shortly after six they were stopping at San Appolinare in Classe, to water the horses.

"Tell me," she said, letting the reins fall over the mane of her horse as it stretched its neck low to drink, "by Inez, you didn't mean your wife, did you?"

Geordie did not catch her meaning at once. Aha! She had read the French translation of the first part of Don Juan. And unpacked his library and dressed for riding as well. Splendid! But what did she really know about his marriage? Certainly no more than other people. She was sounding him out. Let her!

"No," he said, calmly, and stroked his horse's neck.

"It wouldn't have been just the thing to do."

"You are right," he said shortly.

They gathered up their reins and rode on in silence. Not until they reached the greenish-golden shade of the Pineta did Therese let her animal trot.

"I find it difficult to imagine how you are going to go on with Don Juan."

"The plot?"

She nodded.

"That's rather unimportant," he said. "If one really knows what one wants, any plot can be made to do."

She pondered that a few moments.

"I don't mean that. I had the impression from

what I read, that you want to do something quite different from Moliere, for example."

"Of course, and so it is all one what happens next. You ought to give your horse more head, or he will go stiff in the hind-legs." She had reined him in unnecessarily.

She did as he told her, obediently, but was determined that his interest in her riding should not turn her from her interest in his work.

Each plunged deep in thought, they rode back the rest of the way in silence.

When Geordie entered the dining room that evening, he found Silvio who appeared to have been having an excited conversation with his sister. They both grew silent as he entered. The silence was so painful and stupid, that Therese immediately said, "Silvio has discovered by accident that his mail here is scrutinized, and he's afraid now that he will get into political difficulties."

"But surely that's absurd," said Geordie. "What are you expecting of importance?" he asked young Gamba.

"Munitions."

Geordie whistled through his teeth. "Are they on the way?"

"They are to be reloaded at Pisa."

Geordie rubbed the back of his hands together. "Then let the stuff be addressed to me. At least it will travel under the English flag."

"That would be damned dangerous for you," said Silvio, gazing undecidedly at the floor.

Geordie shrugged his shoulders. As the servant entered at that moment with the soup, they were obliged to break off the conversation. Geordie was amused at the admiring glances Silvio cast at him

throughout the meal. What did the boy know of what an Englishman risked in such an affair? And from Italians? After all he was still a member of the House of Lords and thought any little Italian princeling rather subaltern.

As soon as the servant had gone, and Silvio began to thank him, he said, "Stop, anyone else would have given you the same chance."

"I won't believe that without proof."

"I presume," said Geordie, "that this is the only consignment I am to take under my protection?" He had a feeling that he must be careful. "You are attacking soon?"

"Of course, we have to wait for Naples."

"We have to wait for Naples," Geordie repeated, and gazed into space.

The servant came in again with the coffee, and Therese took Silvio off to his room.

"Good God!" thought Geordie. So the Gambas were in it as deep as that. Munitions!

He did not regret shielding the boy. But what were these enthusiastic youths going to do with arms? From all their discussion of their practical plans he had carried away a rather hopeless feeling. Of course, he was on their side. But they hadn't any idea what they really wanted to do, beyond rebelling. Naturally Geordie thought a situation where twenty little dictators and a few French and Austrian generals ruled Italy, ridiculous. Both his English and his more international feelings revolted against it. And the enthusiasm of the young people was really divine.

But his practical intelligence noted the absence of all reality in the affair. No army! And we wait for Naples! Munitions being transported, and not a

whiff of organization! Good God! For stupid as their opponents might also be, they were brutal and able. He saw a terrible debacle ahead.

This was the first time he had really run up against the actual plans of the conspiracy. His impression was crushing.

"If you are clever," he said when Therese returned, "you will keep as much out of this affair as possible."

She did not understand what he meant. "But you've just taken Silvio's side yourself."

"I've helped him out of a trap. That is something quite different. My dear child," he said, "in an affair like this, if twenty divisions are not ready to start firing in twenty places, at the same second, the business is ended before it begins."

"Then you think it is going to fail this time?"

"Liberty is a precarious business. It is not made by blockheads."

She was silent, and strove as usual to understand his point of view. Of the difficulties which he foresaw, she understood nothing, but that someone like Geordie should keep to one side made her thoughtful.

It was a different standpoint from Guiccioli's, who by reason of taxes hoped for a United Italy, yet on the other hand was afraid to lose his fortune should the rising fail, and so preferred to know nothing of the affair.

"May I ask you something?" she said resolutely. "Would you participate if you were convinced the organization was good?"

Geordie considered for a moment. "Yes, certainly," he said.

He saw that she raised her glance to him with a tranquil expression. She always did when, after

some uncertainty, she became convinced that she understood, and was in harmony with him. The next moment Silvio entered.

"A special delivery letter has just arrived for you," he said, his eyes seeking an ash-tray.

Geordie took the envelope and read it. As he glanced up he observed that Therese was watching him with an expression as if she had been shot.

"I must go back to Venice," he said.

"You don't mean it?"

"Unfortunately, there's nothing else to do. My lawyer is coming from London. I've won a lawsuit."

He was sorry for her, standing there so pale and with not a word to say. He felt that she was suffering though she only compressed her lips very tightly. In order to say something, he announced that he could stay another week.

"A week, that's fine," she said, but remained motionless, thinking, "A week, then life will end."

When he reached his room after that evening, which had a very different ending from what he and Therese, each in his own way, had expected, he felt quite agitated to be again so suddenly bound to England. But his attitude was not changed. He did not wish ever to visit England again, not only on A's behalf. They had all played him scurvy tricks; there were too many people he did not like there, and they certainly felt it. So he had won his lawsuit. He had thought that perhaps his heirs would some day manage to end it. Now he would come into possession of great wealth. Coal mines! Pure gold!

How often he had thought about the end of that suit while he was still in England. He must write

to Bel again now. He no longer hated her. He no longer felt even a trace of resentment toward her.

And A? He had made her his life's passion. Strange, how she had become incorporate with him. It was as if their thoughts met in mid-air and understood each the other. He never needed to say a word, she always knew beforehand. There had never been any misunderstanding between them, though he wrote her everything. Even about the hysterical girl and the young lady who audited Fletcher's accounts. She probably understood that he would never come back again. Yet she never wrote a word of surprise or impatience that he always left their future meeting up in the air. Therefore she must love him, just as he loved her. Crosses! Stars! Exclamation points! Theirs was a bond that no happiness in the world could plant deeper in their hearts.

He went to the window. The scent of the summer garden flooded up to him in a cloud, and he felt his heart throb exactly as in the past, when the gardens of Holland House and Six Mile Bottom had scented the air around them. Here the garden was fuller of jasmine and roses. No city in the world, it now seemed to him, had so breathless a hush, so fearful a power of silence, as Ravenna. And it seemed to him, too, as if, in this stillness, his heart throbbed louder than elsewhere.

The ten days he was able to remain, before his lawyer arrived in Venice with the documents, passed quietly. He wondered if he should have him come on to Ravenna, but that was hindered by the fact that a number of necessary papers and signatures were at Mocenigo, and no one else could get at them. He was sorry to go away. He had grown more used

than he thought to Therese. Since the conversation about Don Juan, she had given up her sarcasms. Though she did not say a word, he understood all that she felt. The earnest effort she made to understand him, who was to her nature an alien creature, was enchanting. And she was very pretty.

But nothing happened that might have altered the relations between them.

The nearer the day of departure drew, the more Geordie thought of his conversation with Silvio Gamba. The young fellow was faithful, amiable, and willing to sacrifice himself. But each conversation only deepened his impression that the affair would be managed incompetently. Yet for the very reason that the people who led the movement were so obviously unfitted, their ideas took on greater significance for Geordie. He considered how he could possibly help, at the same time that he declined to go to all meals at whose conclusion there would be political discussion.

As a man who, even in his Harrow days, had learned to think coolly, it irritated him that in a case, where facts were all-important, these people talked and waxed enthusiastic without having the slightest suspicion how to go about an affair requiring men. He did not want to have anything to do with it, or to expose himself to ridicule with a set of people who would no doubt in a short while be shot. His brain and all his cool knowledge of the world strove against it. But just so much the more strongly did the problem, here involved, take hold on the very depths of his nature.

The affair with the munitions was now out of the way, and he saw, from the very folly of it, to what despair the political situation had reduced the best

of the younger people who wanted a United Italy. What could he do?—that was the question he put to himself every day, and this question began to assume proportions for him which he would not have dreamed possible. After all, he was an Englishman. But he was a man who found it intolerable to submit to despotism, even when it only affected others.

In time the idea came to him to utilize his own reputation, to interrupt Don Juan and write something which in a flash would start Europe discussing the suppressed desire of the Italians for liberty, and the politics of the Papal States and Austria.

"That would be better than a weak uprising," he thought.

His doubts about the importance of writing in general were lessened whenever he thought of those helpless youths with their couple of munition caches. The effectiveness of old popguns, when opposed to splendidly led troops with real generals, did not impress him deeply. He could make more effective history with his books. Yet, as he had told Therese Guiccioli, if the situation had seemed reasonable to him and he had seen even a fifty-fifty chance—(being what he then was and what all things in him had become)—he would have joined them.

Why not? History was there, and intelligence, and something of the idea for whose sake, consciously now, unconsciously in the past, he had always written his books.

At the appointed time he went up to Venice and worked day and night for three days with his lawyer, in order at last to set his affairs in England firmly on their financial feet. In the meantime he had had credits and mortgages taken up, bank deposits belonging to his adversaries sequestrated. The

Noel dowry had been dissipated during their marriage, there was so much to record and disentangle. Lastly, he had to draw up power of attorney for negotiations with Lushington. So the memory of his visit in the Romagna faded rapidly away, and naturally his interest in Therese Guiccioli diminished in the same degree, since he no longer saw her.

But when he began to work again, the Mocenigo did not suit him. That power of concentration which he had had in Ravenna was lacking. He had become more accustomed than he suspected to the atmosphere which the young wife created around him.

At the same time, when he lived with Bel Milbanke, he had turned with distrust from a similar feeling. He never wanted women mixing in his affairs: Bel had done penance for that. But he had changed in many ways, and Therese was remarkably adroit in making her inexorable enlistment of him graceful and unobtrusive. Ah well, so it was to be. And he moved from the window, where he could see the towers of Frari and the bow-windows of the Foscari, back to his writing table.

Perceiving, a fortnight after Geordie had left, that she could not go on living apart from him, Therese Guiccioli had her doctor send her to the Mediterranean coast, appearing the next day, with her maid, at the Palazzo Albrizzi.

Beside herself at the thought of the consequences which would ensue, Julia sent round to Geordie. When he arrived, said good-day to Julia and went up to Therese, he noticed that she looked at him exactly as she had done on her first visit to Mocenigo. She shrugged her shoulders slightly and moved her hands, which hung limply at her side,

as if to say: "It's no use! It's comical, but here I am, and may die for all I care, but I can't go on without you."

Geordie would willingly have spared her this plunge into a passion in which her chances were one in five, in which she must constantly give, receiving no more than any beautiful, young and clever woman in love can hope for. He would willingly have spared her, pleasing as she was to him, but if things were not to be otherwise, and if she were bent on being reckless in this affair . . . he would not shun it.

This time he felt, even more strongly than at Mocenigo, how like Augusta she was. There was something about her clothes . . . her perfume, her complexion, her brave face, that struck him as he took her hand.

She promised him to go to the seashore that night, and return at the end of a week to Ravenna. On his part, he promised her to give up Mocenigo in a month and move to Ravenna.

"Menagerie and all?"

He nodded. Her face, which even then had gone the whole road, took on a sweetness that made it appear charming. Even while she was asking the question, Geordie was making an inventory, in his mind, had sold, given away, packed and struck the balance.

It was a chapter of life like so many others, and it had practical accompanying phenomena, such as leases to be given up in Venice, leases to be contracted in Ravenna, which must be dealt with. Menagerie? The word, which Therese had again conjured back to life, turned Geordie's thoughts to the past. Who had spoken like that once before?

And cracked jokes with the same distracted expression?

He smelt the lake, he saw the trees of Newstead Abbey, he felt the springtime in the park, and heard the doves cooing on the roof, the hens burying themselves in the sand, the horses kicking against their stalls, the cow chains rattling. He gazed at the ground, and the weak sensation in his knees swept over him again: Augusta!

He glanced up from under his eyelids and saw Therese Guiccioli there. She was not Augusta. But a bit of her.

3.

THE SHOT

Two years later Geordie sat on a bench in front of Guiccioli's house, waiting for his carriage. He had just paid a farewell visit, before leaving for Rome to meet Hobhouse. He meant to be back in a fortnight.

In those two years he had never been away from Ravenna, and everything now seemed to him like a farewell. Two years, Don Juan, two plays on the Italian problem and a lot of other things. Riding, the Pineta, pistol shooting and Therese. Much peace.

Now he was somewhat feverish to travel.

Guiccioli sat beside him. Suddenly Geordie realized that there was a wagon in the back drive, loaded with furniture.

"Are you expecting hard times?"

"No. Hard bullets," said the old man. "Hard times come only to simpletons." He had a repulsively tinny laugh.

"It's a pity that the simpletons are generally on the right side."

"That is life," said Guiccioli quietly, and began to shiver frightfully, although the sun was shining.

The carriage arrived at that moment, and Geordie waited patiently until Guiccioli could give him his hand.

As he drove through the main thoroughfare of Bologna, a man waved to him from a cafe under the colonnades.

"Hello, Geordie."

"Well, Shelley, everything in good shape?"

"I'm just on my way to Pisa. Had a quick peek at Verona."

"Did you visit Juliet's grave?"

"No, the amphitheatre."

"Nonsense," said Geordie. "You didn't see Juliet's grave? Go back at once."

"I'll think about it," said Shelley, laughing. "You are living in Ravenna, aren't you? Well, Pisa or Ravenna. Pleasant journey."

"Nice fellow," thought Geordie. "And he looks splendid. Pisa? But why, precisely, Pisa?" He recalled that Shelley had been in great difficulties in London. He had not seen him since they were in Geneva. He was certainly one of the three best English poets. But he had made some kind of a hubbub about blasphemy, and behaved rather imprudently. Ridiculous, that he should not have visited Juliet's grave in Verona, but gone to look at Gothic arches.

Nevertheless, he had written Prometheus Unbound, one of the most brilliant books of his generation. The thought that one of the brightest enthusiasts for liberty was so different in his life and in his work, occupied him throughout his journey.

When Geordie saw Hobby's lank, but still austere, face, his slouching, but athletic, gait again, he was delighted.

But he could not free himself from the problem with which the meeting with Shelley had confronted him. He got Prometheus Unbound and read it over. There was really nothing which divided spirit and matter, fact and idea so cleanly and clearly as the books of this man. He felt profoundly moved

by it. Perhaps he would ask him to come to Ravenna.

The week he was in Rome was quite enough for him. It was nice to be with Hobby again, but each skirted so many things. And that was difficult for any length of time. Not a word about Bel. Nothing about A. Their conversation's limits were bounded by Harrow and Cambridge at the lower end and by the state of literature at the upper.

Hobby did not even once mention such names as Melbourne and Lamb, for fear of raising a gale which might bring all manner of things with it. Geordie was obviously in good form. "I shall have to do some squirming in England when they ask me if Geordie inquired about people," thought Hobhouse.

For the rest, Geordie was a mature, calm man, with a hard trusty face. Surely one could talk everything over calmly with him, too. But why? Hobhouse's strength had always lain in discretion. So their life for a few days was a masterpiece of proving how reserved two men can be, who know everything there is to know about each other.

On the morning of departure they passed the Apollo Belvedere together. Geordie stopped and laughed. "Doesn't he look like Lady Forbes?"

"He is certainly no Napoleon," said Hobhouse dryly.

"I should have been satisfied if at least he looked like Voltaire," replied Geordie. Ridiculous, so much ado about a feminine nude.

All the way back to Ravenna Geordie thought of this last conversation. Hobby was rather like Shelley, too. They looked too much behind, and had too many aesthetic categories in their heads.

He remembered the lack of interest with which, in Florence, he gazed upon the marble atrocities that Michael Angelo had erected over the graves of fifty mouldering inconsequent skeletons. What had they ever done, really? But he had walked with respect over the places in S. Croce where Galileo and Alfieri lay underfoot. Some emanation came from them, like that he felt whenever he passed Dante's grave in Ravenna.

He conjured up Hobby's face. The dearest of fellows! Gray at the temples, though. But wasn't he, too?

He reached home rather late at night, and hardly had he got to bed before guns went off in all directions.

"The devil," he thought, jumping out of bed, "it's started."

A real street battle, of course. Everything barricaded. Twice he attempted, when he was dressed again, to get through the streets. He might just as well have committed suicide.

It was unsafe even on the balcony. He saw a glare of fire and explosions everywhere. Bullets flew whistling by. Artillery had ridden up somewhere.

Well, nothing could happen to the Guicciolis. The old man was as sly as a fox and had taken precautions. The Gambas could not be helped.

Geordie lay down, fully dressed, on his bed, and slept for a few hours. Hardly had he got up again when Fletcher came in with his tea. The town was in the hands of the authorities, he said. The Unitists had begun to attack without any regular plan. There had been an arrest in Naples, and somebody had confessed, so the outbreak had simply begun in

order to get a head start of the government in the matter of imprisoning and shooting.

"Well, the government will begin shooting, in spite of that,—only twenty-four hours later," said Geordie grimly. "Perhaps," he added, "things will be run off more humanely in Ravenna since the governor is a Papal Legate."

He was still at his tea when old Gamba entered. He had fled in the night to Geordie's garden, but had caught his foot in a water pipe and hung dangling. The old man was limping and looked really comical after his night in the open. Of course he knew hardly anything. They went out on to the balcony to see if the street was clear, for Geordie wanted to go at once to Guiccioli.

The commander of the government troops was just riding by. At that moment they saw a couple of soldiers step out of an olive grove, which bordered the street, take aim, and fire at their general from behind. He raised his arm, let it sink slowly, and dropped like a sack.

Geordie rushed down, opened the garden door, and, without troubling about the patrol, who aimed at him, too, ran to the spot where the horse stood quietly beside the commander whose head lay between its legs. With two of his servants, who had run down with him, Geordie carried him into the house. A quarter of an hour later the general, stripped and washed, lay on an iron bedstead. He had a number of dark holes in his back. The doctor withdrew his forceps from the last wound. One shot had gone through the heart, another through the arm and then the hand, a third through the body. What lay there was the body of an old ath-

lete with a hawk's nose. On his breast and shoulder were a number of old white scars.

The doctor held up the last bullet in his forceps. "Chopped lead."

"Poor fellow," he said. "But he was a traitor."

"Silence," old Gamba roared at him. "The Legate had him murdered merely because he declined to have the prisoners shot at sight."

"That's none of my affair," said the doctor, and put his probe slowly into his pocket.

Geordie wondered where Gamba could have found that out. The old man must simply have made it up.

Shortly afterwards, a messenger came with a note saying that Silvio had fled to Florence, and that everything was all right at Guiccioli's.

"Thank God," said the old man. "Don't forget when you go out that there are bullets for you, too."

"A bullet for me would cost the Legate too dear," said Geordie grimly. He realized that his taking in the wounded general must have aroused a suspicion that he sympathized with the rebels. That must be cleared up. Once he had started, Geordie always acted quickly and decisively.

Old Gamba, who was afraid of arrest, was highly delighted when Geordie had the English flag run up from his roof. Now he was on English soil. No one could get at him there. But he soon observed that he could not get out, either, which brought on a fit of old man's fury that resembled an old wolf's.

"For God's sake, keep quiet for a second," said Geordie, as he sat down and wrote the following letter to the Legate.

Your Excellency: I have had the misfortune to see a couple of your soldiers shoot General Riccardo Sinibaldi,

your commandant, in the back, under my windows. As I was a witness of the affair, I had the General brought into my house. When you send for the corpse, kindly be good enough not to send the same soldiers, as they later fired on me as I was leaving my house. Doubtless your Excellency will be pained to learn that the General was murdered with old nails. I am,

Yours,
G. B.

He was quite certain that, with this letter, he was posing a problem to the Papal State such as had never yet been posed by a member of the English House of Lords.

"What do you bet that he answers politely?"

Gamba was not quite so sure.

When Geordie got to Guiccioli's, he learned that apparently the commandant had been got out of the way for the very reason that Gamba had taken for granted. Geordie showed Therese the chopped lead bullets.

"I'll have them mounted and give them to you as a memento."

"Of what?" asked the old man.

Geordie told him the contents of the letter he had sent the Legate. The old man merely raised his eyebrows and stared vacantly at his top button. He was red in the face, but said nothing.

When Geordie returned, he had Guiccioli go to the Legate. Guiccioli could prove his innocence and had no need to go there to do so. But his relationship to the Gambas could no more be denied than could his friendship with a man who wrote letters which must have given the Legate a sharp pain in his fundament.

The Legate, who looked like a handsome woman

of forty, let him talk. It did not take the old man long to convert Geordie into a blackguard who was upsetting his marriage. The Legate was not so naive as to stray into that snare. Naturally he could not have the old man arrested. But he had still less intention of doing him the favor of banishing Geordie, for he saw the diplomatic difficulties in his path.

"I will separate these people," he said in a kindly tone, and that night sent an order of banishment to Therese. The blow was aimed diabolically at everyone, and was an exquisite revenge for Geordie's letter. If Therese had to go, he would be rid of Geordie, too. And with Silvio Gamba's sister, the Legate could do as he wished. It was really a courtesy only to banish her.

The order of banishment for old Gamba came at the same time. He rubbed his toothless jaws and growled, though nothing better could possibly have been expected for him.

Through the English ambassador, Geordie managed to get eight days respite for Therese. He had the old wolf lope off to Florence.

The next blow in this affair must come from Guiccioli; he was fighting against both sides, against Geordie and against the Legate, and he was a tenacious man, though old.

And the old fellow struck a hard blow: by order of the Curia, Therese was to live only in a convent, after leaving Ravenna. This decree cost the English Ambassador many curses and despatches. But, as it was inhuman, he succeeded in getting Rome to modify it in such a way that, since Therese possessed a father, she had either to live in a convent or "under her father's roof."

As a result of this counter-blow, Guiccioli suffered

a slight stroke and paralysis of the left side of his face. But in compensation, he was, of course, forever rid of his shivering fits. The last one had come upon him while he was with the Legate, who had taken it for a trick and was greatly enraged by it.

Every time that Geordie entered his house that day he went to the room where the murdered General lay. Each time he felt more drawn to the dead man. Even though the General had been a quite ordinary man, his face had taken on an expression which Geordie had never yet seen on the face of any living man, nor yet on that of a dead one.

Geordie had seen many dead people before. Twice he had been present in the Peloponnesus when people were shot. They were simply no longer there. All expression wiped off their faces. In Patras, the corpses of plague victims were tied to a board and carried daily past his windows. But they did not come into consideration, for they were as blue as frozen vegetables. Until that time he had been most deeply impressed when Long's face was uncovered. The sharp stone had split the swimmer's skull, but his face was hardly touched. Noel Long, the dear fellow, had looked as if he were just about to crack his usual joke about the leg of mutton—an incomprehensible expression when one recalled how he had died.

But in the manly features of the dead General there was something like a bridge, leading into a region that was higher and purer than the probable level of his life as an officer. So such things did exist. At the same time, he had sympathized only very slightly with the Unitists, perhaps had merely prevented a few nice boys from being shot; his own death had come the instant he heard the shots fired.

And yet the one decent thought, and it was his, which had come out of this debacle, had given his face something like perfection. Some profound purity and peace had settled round the dead man's hawk-nose, and beautified his predatory features at the very moment when a quarter of a pound of chopped nails riddled his body.

It made a deep impression on Geordie every time he entered the room. Something wonderful had here risen out of human imperfection. Probably without the man's having suspected it. But was that not precisely wherein its strangeness lay?

Late in the afternoon they took the dead man away. The Legate wrote:

Your Lordship: I have the honor to inform you that the soldiers cited by you are in chains. They will be sent to Rome tomorrow. I am horrified at the terrible death of the General, and am sending my own carriage to fetch him. Please accept my sincere thanks for your friendly assistance, and also my apologies for the inconvenience caused you. God has shown His righteous power in an inscrutable way during the last few days. We have all to submit to it, even you, and

Your servant,

A. V.

Geordie angrily crammed this letter into his pocket. His rage was not directed against the Legate, but the Gambas. Against opponents of this sort, who wrote such letters, and at the same time had such orders carried out, one did not proceed with a few popguns in the night. Those boys ought to be spanked.

As Guiccioli was in bed with his stroke, it was not difficult to get Therese away to Florence. Another chapter! Geordie saw that this time there were five

wagons full of luggage; without counting horses and dogs.

"When I came to Italy, I had one box of clothes and my pistols."

Therese blushed and cocked her head on one side. It was she who had held him there.

In Florence, Geordie would allow nothing to be unpacked, for all the exiles were there, theorizing over their defeat, and that was even more painful to him than their earlier discussions. Strangely enough, all those who had at least managed to retain their heads on their shoulders, now had little martyr's haloes perched on them, for the Liberal circles all over the Continent sympathized with them.

Geordie was just considering where he should go next, when Fletcher brought the news, from the English servants' colony, that Shelley had been in Florence buying a yawl. "I have not seen him myself," explained Fletcher, in order to round off his report correctly,—and set the teacups on the table.

Geordie had been listening distractedly, but the moment Fletcher mentioned Shelley's name an idea came to him that filled him with joy. He discussed it with Gamba and Therese, then with his agent. By evening he had rented the Palazzo Lanfranchi—in Pisa.

It was, as Gamba had assured him, one of those heaps of marble in which they could occupy at most one floor, if they did not all want to go groping after one another as in a mine. "It's not for me. I'll rent a garden house."

Geordie looked at him ironically. For, besides Therese, he now had the whole family, who had left Ravenna penniless, in his 'suite.' Who would

do the renting? He, of course. Naturally Therese would have what she wanted. The old wolf would have to make the best of it—especially as he would growl in any case.

Therese was all eagerness to meet Shelley, though as a Catholic, and full of inhibitions, she had no real sympathy for the blasphemer. But, she thought to herself, Geordie was seeking a sympathetic Englishman for companionship again.

But Geordie really went to Pisa only to get away from Florence, and to discuss with Shelley the expression on the face of the dead General.

4.

FUNERAL PYRE

They had moved in late autumn. Therese had a small garden palazzo in which she slept "under her father's roof." Now it was late spring, almost summer. Seeing it lying directly below her, she thought how she had once escaped towards that blue Mediterranean down there. That time when she had suddenly appeared at Julia Albrizzi's and got Geordie. She sat on the balcony, and Geordie came through the mallows to her.

He nodded, touched her forehead with his lips and sat down beside her.

"Who won?" she asked with an attentive look.

"Shelley."

Therese knew that Geordie always beat her brother, and was a very good shot with a pistol, though his hand shook slightly. But Geordie did not take his defeats very seriously. He understood a good deal about the sport, had his own theories about aim and air resistance, and treated shooting as a mathematical problem.

He shrugged his shoulders. "A crack shot, like me, thinks of shooting when he pulls the trigger, but Shelley gazes into space and thinks of something else entirely."

Therese perceived that, in spite of Shelley's success, Geordie had not a very high opinion of his shooting.

Shelley arrived shortly afterwards. He was in a riding habit.

"We only wanted to look in for a moment," he said, kissing Therese's hand. "I've covered the horses. Sometimes a cold gust comes up from the water, in spite of the heat. Why have you hung out so many flags?"

"The Court is in Pisa today," said Therese. "*We* didn't hang out the flags."

"Are you going to be there?" Shelley turned to Geordie.

"You must be mad," said Geordie.

When Shelley had gone, Therese said with amusement, "Shelley would certainly have gone though he's just begun his 'Hellas.'"

"From pure thoughtlessness. Fortunately he hasn't been invited."

"Did he really make an unpleasant business with his blasphemy that time?"

Therese looked curiously into Geordie's eyes.

"Bosh," said Geordie angrily. "It was exaggerated out of all proportion. He had nothing more to object against your Almighty God, than the Gamba family against the Legate of Ravenna. Adieu, dearest, until this evening."

She heard him trot away. What Geordie had said was surely true. She recalled her first meeting with Shelley, when he had greeted her on her arrival in Pisa. A slight, sporty-looking man, with a very sunburnt complexion, had stopped them in the outer gardens. He had saluted like a naval officer. "I'm looking forward to sailing with you," he called down to the carriage. "Have you brought your pistols with you?" She was quite bewildered by the questions he put to Geordie. Then he bowed low.

"Countess Guiccioli," said Geordie.

He kissed her hand. She had not imagined the

author of Prometheus Unbound at all like that. He spent the whole day on the water in his yawl. But his soft, quiet voice belied his interests. There was something about him which seemed capable of raising a sick man and sending him, mended, to walk in the garden.

Shelley himself interested her less than did the question of what Geordie found in him. For her interest in what things occupied Geordie, and why, made up the substance of her life. During the winter she slowly, but clearly, grasped the contradictions in Shelley's nature. He had so tranquil and clear an influence on one when he discussed life or some problem, that one put unswerving faith in him.

Geordie seemed like a bland muddle-head beside him. At first Shelley had cast Geordie so much into the shade, that one would have credited him with being able to do anything, while Geordie seemed incapable even of collecting the crew of a yacht.

But when it came down to a question of acting, Shelley suddenly had no idea of how or why. . . . He grew confused and his glance sought Geordie. Strange! Well bred and practical as Shelley looked, he nearly always did the wrong thing.

And then in money matters! There the difference between them was particularly sharp. Geordie was really generous, yet was he not at times almost miserly? She recalled the story of the yacht which he had bought for two hundred pounds, and sold again for three hundred. She found at the time that he had refused to include the sailors' jackets in the price, and for a trifling matter of ten pounds had nearly broken off negotiations. It struck her particularly, that the securer Geordie's financial situation was—and he had, she believed, an income of

some twenty thousand pounds a year—the more stringently was that income administered. He speculated somewhat eagerly and skilfully on the Stock Exchange. And if he gave money to people who begged from him, he scrutinized those people and their business carefully, and said yes or no, and had his own reasons.

Geordie had no needs of his own. Actually Therese could not quite understand that. What could not an Italian have done with that income! If Geordie had not dined with her in the evenings, he would have lived entirely on scrambled eggs.

Shelley might, so Geordie told her, have had an even larger income, but he had quarrelled with his father in a senseless way. All Shelley's heroisms were really rather stupid; of course they were noble and an expression of conviction, but they were unnecessary.

They were always lacking in that sense of proportion which a man must have in estimating the effect and the risk of any action.

He always acted on 'principle,' and not on reflection. Else he would not have run away with a silly goose in order to provoke his father, when he might have lived perfectly quietly with her. It was not his life, nor yet the girl, that was important to him, but the elopement.

He had really no knowledge of human nature at all. On the threshhold of life he broke down completely. No, Geordie as a man, did not need this Englishman, even if he showed better results at the target. There was something else, and of course Therese discovered it quickly, for she felt it herself. It was that Geordie sensed in this man

something which he himself could express only in his books.

When Shelley spoke it was with the same force of conviction as in his books. He had the faculty, with his visionary look and beautiful voice, of transmuting the world to something as harmonious as he wished it. He brought not only order, but beauty, into the chaos around him—disclosed, with majestic simplicity, inter-relationships and backgrounds; in brief, he lived his poems. That, Therese felt, was what attracted Geordie.

She herself was hypnotized by it. There was in Shelley's ideas an inexorability, a purity, a capacity for seeing beyond things, such as she had never expected to find in such consistency, in a man. What he said was always clear, graded, everything was observed in its degree and importance. "At the same time," thought Therese, "it was observed so kindly." There was a good deal of the woman in Shelley.

She recalled that Geordie had once told her that he imagined the Man of Nazareth to have been like that. Geordie did not like the simple-minded, feminine representations that were broadcast as Christ. Well, Shelley looked devilishly well and really rather like an English naval officer—but Geordie might be right.

She much preferred Geordie, God knows. There was more of the man about him, at any rate. It was pitiful to see how Shelley muddled his whole life, and how blind he was in his private affairs. A short time before, he had borrowed three hundred pounds to lend a man who went straight off to London and reported that Shelley was drinking and appeared to be very much down in the world. Well, life was full of contradictions.

While she was musing, her glance straying over the Roman palaces, the olive-covered hills, the beach, and far out to sea, a shadow fell on the verandah. Shelley had returned through the mallows.

"Did I leave my spurs lying about here?" he asked, and sat down for a moment.

"Has it ever occurred to you that Geordie is a real strategist? Recently he showed me on a contour map, why, practically speaking, your insurrection was a blunder."

"Haven't you noticed it before?" said Therese with an indefinite expression. "He is really not a genuine author."

"Well, he's not a general either," said Shelley, smiling.

"I don't know about that," said Therese. "There are your spurs. Good-bye till tonight."

When Geordie brought Therese home that evening, he said, "I'm going to Florence tomorrow. I may be away a few days. There are several people there from the English Committee for Greece. Really, Shelley ought to go, but he's rigged the cutter for tomorrow. It doesn't interest him to hear about sheep, statistics, soldiers and shooting."

It was nearly four days before Geordie returned. He found Therese with a distracted expression and red spots on her cheeks. "Have you heard, Shelley has been missing for three days?"

Geordie drew her quickly to him. If Shelley had been missing for three days in such weather, he was dead. He sensed, as he drew Therese to him, that she understood what he was feeling. That was one of her finest sides.

Shelley dead? Geordie was now more than thirty-four. Hobby and Clare—that was something differ-

ent. The friendship of youth. Loyalty. Dependability. But Shelley had loved his mind.

Shelley remained missing for fourteen days. One morning a fisherman came to Lanfranchi and asked to see Geordie, to claim the reward he had offered. According to the man's account, the body lay about five miles away. In what condition must it be!

Above all it was important to make sure that it was really Shelley. Geordie asked the man if he could ride. Then away!

In twenty minutes they were there, and three minutes later Geordie knew that it was really Shelley who had been washed up. He looked even worse than Geordie had feared. A shudder passed over him as he saw what the sea and the fishes had made of that well-bred body. Certain little details occurred to him. Shelley had had a fondness for the flower-covered ruins of Cavacalla—he had written Prometheus Unbound there. He had loved still more the pyramid of Caius Cestius. It was a place, Shelley had said, where one could really love Death itself. Shelley had had very few desires. If he wished to be buried there, that desire should be granted.

Only, it was impossible to transport the body without damaging it terribly. It was really no longer a body. What was to be done? Geordie reflected, and immediately an idea occurred to him. Only, one must act quickly. There might be a little scandal afterwards. But that did not matter in the end —and he could get permission, subsequently.

First of all he must tell the fisherman to say nothing, and he would rent this stretch of beach. Silvio could manage that.

Riding home, he saw, lying at anchor, the English

battleship whose commander had called on him two days before. That gave him a second idea.

Fletcher was really quite horrified when he learned at ten o'clock in the morning that Shelley was to be burned on the beach that day, and that he was not to mention it to anyone. But Noel Long's funeral had shown him what funerary views were held in Cambridge. And what had the other servant not told him about old B. at Newstead Abbey! Sighing deeply, he prepared to send the wood quietly to the fisherman's hut, and a letter to the warship.

"That is my yacht," said Geordie to the five English officers with whom he rode along the beach. She lay with white sails spread and flag at half mast, before the hazy shapes of Elba and Gorgona, whose mother-of-pearl outlines almost met, above the glassy surface of the sea.

It was five o'clock. The beach was sedgy and full of thistles.

"A pretty boat," said one of the officers. "Is the weather always so clear here?" He pointed to the chain of Alps whose marble sides shone like snow.

"Nearly always. Will you dismount now?"

At that moment they all saw a flame rise from behind the bushes. They drew nearer and noticed a plover soar, screaming, into the air. The flames were very high, and it was only when slight puffs of wind parted them that they could make out a man's body. The smoke drifted slowly along the whole coastline, like a fog. The old square watch-towers could hardly be seen.

Then Geordie went up to the officers and shook hands with them, one after another. He explained to the Commander that he himself would have to

remain a little longer to collect the ashes, but that he should expect them all at dinner that evening. Thereupon the officers rode back along the Spiagga, without knowing more than that the dead man had been an Englishman. Obviously, people here had singular funerals, but then it was a Catholic country. And they had done an Englishman a favor. They saw their ship again, lying out beyond, and they were glad to think that they would soon be off these horses and out of the damned sand. They felt a lively satisfaction in being Englishmen.

The Gambas had thought it better not to go. Geordie approved their attitude. But in the evening he found out what Italians really are. When Fletcher brought in a little box, no bigger than two hands, and Geordie took it by the cord and set it on the table, Silvio went as white as if he had caught a blow on the breast-bone. "Why are Italians so sensitive to externals?" thought Geordie.

The old wolf murmured something with more composure. But what he said angered Geordie. Shelley was a brave man—of course he was. But was he not more than that? "Lice are brave, too," said Geordie grimly and left the room.

As Geordie lay awake that night, he saw the moonlight falling through his window. In it, the little box stood quite clearly on the table. Geordie gazed at it with satisfaction. It was nice that Shelley was now so tidily laid away.

His thoughts kept reverting to Shelley continually that night. He felt again as he had felt when he gazed at the face of the dead man in Ravenna, the man whose breast had been riddled with broken nails. Those two pounds of ashes over there taught him once more that there was only one real thing in

the world, that was the idea for which one lived. Damned little else was left.

Neither the General nor Shelley had had much success in putting across his views. That was probably a matter of luck. But, for Geordie, there was essentially another question at issue, namely, whether it was enough just to sit and write. Sometimes Geordie thought 'yes.' But sometimes he thought 'no.' Either was probably right. Apparently, it was mainly a matter of temperament. One would see.

Shortly afterwards there was a brawl in front of the Lanfranchi while Silvio was out riding with an English officer, Captain Trelawney. It was not quite clear what had happened. Geordie came upon the vestiges of a battle in which his servants had participated, and as a result of which an Italian lieutenant found a pitch-fork deeply embedded in his hinderparts.

Next day the Ravenna maneuvers were repeated.

"Hereafter I shall sign leases in Italy only for a fortnight at a time," said Geordie when Silvio showed him the order of banishment for the Gamba family.

This time they all moved to Genoa, where Geordie had an appointment with the chief secretary of the English Committee for Greece.

During their conversation in Genoa, each received the impression that the other needed something from him. It all happened like lightning. By the third day, Geordie had already signed a preliminary agreement with the Committee.

The Committee bound itself, at its own cost, to undertake an exact, minute investigation of the political, military and financial situation in Greece. Geordie added all imaginable kinds of demands into

the bargain, which horrified the secretary: he knew the situation!

If the investigation showed a seventy per cent chance on the points which Geordie had raised, he declared himself ready to join the executive committee, to contribute a round sum of money, and personally to undertake the leadership of operations in Greece; in return, to bind himself for several years to the Committee. His presence in Greece should be as he saw fit. In addition, he demanded, as long as he should be there, plein pouvoir.

"Those are your terms?"

"Yes."

"Then I will run over them again."

When, at one point, the secretary read out 'satisfactory results,' he stopped and observed, "It's a question here of an investigation of the Greek artillery. Doesn't the word 'satisfactory' admit of too personal an interpretation? In other places, the word is seventy per cent."

"Don't worry about that, put down fifty per cent," said Geordie. "That means: possible. I don't want more for risking a few good English coal mines. But it must not be less either. You understand that, don't you?"

"Certainly," said the chief secretary. "I'm delighted that for once somebody looks at this business with his bank account in mind, instead of with that damned sentimentality that knocks all calculations on the head."

5.

SEVEN ISLANDS

"Atkinson," said Admiral Sir Charles Napier to the naval lieutenant, who stood before him on the balcony of his bungalow in Cephalonia. "What time is it? Eight? Then in an hour you will sail down the Gulf and cruise about outside during the night. Double the port lights! And when the ship arrives with the young man, pilot it in. But don't let him come ashore before morning. Good night."

"Good night, sir," said the officer, touching his cap and facing about.

"Another thing, Atkinson," said the Governor, before the young man had closed the door. "Were you ever at St. James'? Well, you know—never sit down until certain personages are seated, never get up before, and so on. I expect you to accord the young man special, but not too conspicuous, treatment."

Atkinson looked at his admiral. "Sir Charles, am I to understand by that that I am to fire a cannon when I sight his ship?"

"Don't you ever understand an order, man? Or do you find something to object to in my manner of expressing myself?" said the Admiral, and screwed up his eyes until the pupils were mere pin points.

Damned stupid, the young people of today. Everyone of them wanted to be instructed minutely before he carried on, and anybody could do that. But the indefinite instructions, the incidental orders, why did men who could not understand them have

to serve in the Fleet? If he had failed to understand them in his day, where would he be now?

He turned his gaze to the Gulf. He was not yet certain himself how he should receive this young man who would cause him so much bother. But he would know well enough once the time came. Perhaps he would have a salute fired, perhaps not. In the meantime, he was tired.

The young officer, who had been waiting in a soldierly fashion, comprehended that he was to retire without enlightenment. He saluted and bowed.

"Good night, sir."

"Good night."

Actually, Atkinson left in a rather confused state of mind.

They were always the same: nice, dashing, stupid people, sent out to him from England. The Governor walked through his bungalow, down the steps, and out in front of the house. He looked down again. Everything was in order, he could see the lights all the way down the Gulf of Argostoli.

"Patrick," he said to the sentry, before he went into the house again, "if anything goes wrong with the signal lights tonight, the devil take your eyes. If you see double port lights, wake me directly it gets light."

"Yes, sir."

In this fashion the Admiral fell asleep, and the Hercules, seeking the entrance to the Gulf of Argostoli, at two o'clock in the morning, found a gunboat which piloted her through the long channel.

At three o'clock Patrick saw the doubled port lights.

At five o'clock he went into the bungalow, drew

back the curtain, and laid his hand on the Admiral's arm.

Sir Charles Napier awoke with an oath, although he had slept wonderfully. He looked out the window at once. Everything shipshape.

For the last month the Governor had been annoyed at the thought of the imminent arrival of this young man who would be the twentieth annoyance to him in this business. Now the man was here. The Governor was satisfied—everything was shipshape, at least.

Just as he sat down to his tea on the narrow balcony, the sun rose. It was half past five. He got up and put on his hat before the mirror. For one moment he glimpsed a pock-marked face, with yellow skin, a lean, firm chin, a sharp nose and clear eyes. He went slowly out of the house and down to the beach. His figure was rather good, not too small, but his neck was short. He stopped for a moment by the shore-battery and stared thoughtfully at the ground. Then he beckoned to the sergeant.

"Do you see that palm over there?"

"Yes, sir."

The man had a round red face, and was young. Irish, probably.

"Now pay attention to what I'm saying. When I'm returning, if I take off my hat in the boat, at that point, then let these things growl."

"Yes, sir."

"And if I don't take off my hat, then nothing is to stir here."

"Yes, sir."

"Understand?"

The red-bearded one stood at attention.

Now that was settled. That's the way things al-

ways happened—of themselves. Oh, that Atkinson! Napier had quite forgotten to ask if he'd fired a salute that night. But he would hear about it on board. Whatever he'd done, it was sure to be wrong, but now he'd be able to set it right, as he saw fit.

Geordie had been standing for an hour at the rail of the Hercules. So this was Cephalonia. He recalled how he had first seen it, with Hobby. Then it had lain like a nest on the warm silk of the sea. Now it began to emerge slowly from the morning mists. Silent and bare and desolate, the shores loomed up on both sides of the narrow Gulf in which the ship lay. The sea was still cool, and Geordie shivered slightly.

The delicate peach-pink of the sky, behind the cliffs, made the dreariness still more stark. How many miles was it to Corfu? He guessed about a hundred, though it was a bare sixty. A hundred miles farther south! He remembered it all so differently.

"Fletcher," he said, as he saw the officers put off from the shore, "tell Count Gamba and Captain Trelawney that it is high time for them to come on deck."

Five minutes later Charles Napier and four officers climbed aboard. He threw his legs quite youthfully over the rail and went straight up to Geordie.

"Are you the man? Yes? How are you? Have you had a good voyage?" He saluted.

"Really quite good. Four days out of Leghorn. Ah, this is Captain Trelawney, Captain Hamilton Brown and Count Gamba."

"May I introduce my officers?" He mentioned their names. Geordie shook hands with them, then went three paces to one side with Charles Napier.

"Well, then, I assume that you have had instructions from London, and that they have written you how far you are to support me."

"Of course." Napier once more took minute stock of Geordie with a glance that shot from under his lids and pierced the pupils of Geordie's eyes.

"According to the instructions from London, you have me at your disposal in such a way as may seriously embarrass me."

"That is obvious," said Geordie, and in his turn looked at the Admiral. "Nobody in England has any idea of the situation. I don't know if you yourself thought of making the Seven Islands an Ionic Republic, but, at any rate, you represent England's protectorate here, and naturally must keep out of difficulties with the Turks, whereas I am already at war with them. Isn't that so? On the other hand, you must know that London has a very strong desire that I be successful. I can imagine your feelings."

"Very good. Then I don't need to repeat them to you."

"Very well, sir. But I might suggest to you at once that, during the time I am in Cephalonia, I remain on the ship and sleep in my cabin."

The Admiral looked at him. "Excellent. Then you can do as you like without it's concerning me in the least. Won't you come ashore in my boat? How long are you remaining here?" he asked as they were rowed ashore.

"That depends entirely on circumstances. Before I know which of the three Greek parties is the most reliable, I won't support any of them. Until then I shall certainly remain here, and let Trelawney and Brown run their legs off in the Peloponnesus, till I

can really see my way clearly. I will have nothing to do with the intrigues of these Greek generals. I'm afraid you'll have me here for quite some time."

"Well," said the Admiral, "when I saw your artillery business up there beside the horse-crates, I thought you probably intended to take Lepanto or the other west coast fort, at once. I find what you say quite sensible."

He looked at the young man. So that was the kind of young man he was. Obviously he understood incidental orders.

"Sir Charles," said Geordie, smiling, "you must have met with some strange people out here."

"You're damned right," said the Admiral darkly, and standing up in the boat, took off his hat, and mopped his brow with his handkerchief. Now those things ought to growl. They did, with a vengeance.

"If you're going to remain that long, I'll put a bungalow at your disposal, of course. It's four miles to the left, quite nice, on the shore. But officially you'll remain on the ship, won't you?" Then he spoke to the young man in a different tone. "Now you'll have a decent bath, and tea, real Caravan tea."

A week later Geordie bade farewell to the two captains who were sailing down the Greek coast on a gunboat. "Go carefully with those fellows, Trelawney. And don't be too courageous all at once. It was your courage that got us thrown out of Pisa. Pleasant journey." The two captains were hard and able men. He really need not have said that. But so much depended on their findings.

Geordie gazed around. He had no desire to ride back, so he turned his horse towards the rising ground. Yes, he thought, he was already fairly in

the picture here, and saw the business clearly. But he wanted to see it very clearly.

He would gladly have led his horse at that point, for there was a climb of a thousand feet over stony ground to Fort Hag. He was sorry for the animal, but he could not make his way very well there because of his foot.

When he arrived at the top, he stared down at the sea. The Gulf of Argostoli wound through a very narrow fiord. On it the gunboat lay like a lump of cotton wadding. Farther out, the sea lay pearl-gray around the Island of Zante, while to the east, soft as a cloud, rose the outline of the Peloponnesus. To the west, he could see across Cephalonia to the Paliki peninsula. And somewhat beyond that, must lie Missolonghi. That was the most threatened spot, therefore everything would soon centre around it. But he was determined to wait and not to hasten anything.

Then the white speck on the fiord passed through the entrance, while, to either side, on the sea, its prow left lines that kept broadening into wake behind. At that moment the die was cast.

The two captains down there on the gunboat had no irrelevant visits to make. They were his agents, and everybody knew that they were persons seeking out places where Geordie should post his soldiers.

When he gathered up the reins again, he noticed that his horse was shivering. He laid his head against its neck. The animal held its breath for a moment, then snuffed at his hand. It was a beautiful black Arab, and had already been shipped from Ravenna to Pisa, and from Pisa to Genoa. It had suffered terribly from sea sickness, and had not yet got back into form.

He thought of the day when he had seen Corfu for the first time,—he and Hobby. They had been as delighted as puppies. How different everything was then. Now he was thirty-six years old. Each morning when he combed his hair, he saw how gray and thin it was becoming.

The horse grew restive, for the sea-wind suddenly caught it on the flank. "Quiet, Yali." He led it over the bridge into the fort. The horse felt out of place in this region where there were nothing but asses. It was difficult to find a stretch to gallop in.

On the way down, Geordie felt still more strongly the change in his circumstances. For thirty-five years he had done as he pleased. Now he had thrown himself into an enterprise from which he could no longer free himself. It not only saddled him with difficulties, but also with responsibility. So it was.

But he would not have traded it for the earlier days; he loved these difficulties, and rejoiced that at last things were coming to a head. He had not imagined that the preparations would be so troublesome, or so petty.

For weeks, letters and delegations had been coming from all sides—each new day strengthened the influence of his presence, and for the very reason that he held back, every little condottiere sought to win him for himself. Both good and influential people, and rascals, came to Cephalonia. In the first few months Geordie saw several fanatics and several hundred swine, who found themselves together under the aegis of one idea. They all overestimated the stream of gold. They all overestimated Geordie's influence. But they all suspected that England was behind him.

England was powerful enough, even if she herself did not want to go to war, to make a real war out of the insurrection of a few regiments, and out of that war to call a state into being. It was this vision that caused a dozen generals to cast appraising eyes upon themselves.

One evening Geordie told the Admiral that the regimental leader Odysseus, who was quartered in the neighborhood of Athens, had sent him an invitation to visit him, stating naively, as a pretext, that Geordie would find good snipe shooting with him during the winter.

Napier slapped his knees with his hands. "A Levantine like that, has absolutely no idea how to get at us. Maybe a hero's death will do it. Maybe snipe shooting. God only knows to what foreigners will react."

"At any rate, no heroes' deaths, if you please," said Geordie, smiling.

"What is your real opinion of this Odysseus?"

"You might as well ask me about the weather."

"I mean in a military sense, and so forth."

"Well, they are naturally gifted that way."

"But what prevents them from being generals is that they are more pleased at the defeat of one of their colleagues than at the defeat of the Turks' Albanian regiments."

"Oh, well," said Geordie, "I haven't yet given up hope of finding a gentleman among them."

The military situation was satisfactory in some places, in others unsatisfactory. The Peloponnesus was free, except for a few towns on the north coast, but in Sparta the various Greek divisions were firing on one another. In the northeast, one division had cut off a Turkish army at Thermopylae, and hurled

it back. The chief danger was from Scutari. Several Turkish divisions were nearing Missolonghi, along the coast, just opposite Cephalonia. Some seven or eight Greek volunteer corps were in as many places, holding the same number of Turkish corps in check. But they had no supreme command. There was a kind of governing council in Sparta to which nobody ever paid any attention. Now the second president of that body since Geordie had been in Cephalonia, had decamped by night on a donkey. This man, whose name was Maurokordato, interested Geordie most, but like all the rest, he remained a puzzle as long as Geordie had not seen him. He was now sitting tight on the island of Hydra. He was a cultured man, from one of the few ancient Greek families still in existence; had been educated in Constantinople and was addressed as Prince by the embassy, which made him enemies, for in Greece there was no nobility.

To Geordie he seemed the one main chance. All the other generals were men of iron conscience, Albanian sergeants or ship captains from the Islands, doughty leaders of small bands, who went sublimely to their deaths, or just as willingly sent someone else, but no outstanding figures. Yet, in spite of everything, Geordie could not reach a decision about Maurokordato.

He followed intently the development of the campaign against Missolonghi, to whose assistance no one went. Should he go to Missolonghi? Into a trap? A forlorn hope? Waiting was less difficult for Geordie than he had anticipated.

In the meanwhile the weather had grown worse. He sat in his tiny cabin for weeks on end, while the rain poured down in torrents. When he went on

deck, everything was shrouded and gray. Sometimes the cliffs poked through, dark and unfeeling. The Gulf was storm-tossed, and huge waves thundered outside on the coast.

This was a different life from that of Mocenigo and Lanfranchi. One of his visitors had imported bed-bugs into his cabin, which annoyed him. When he went ashore, he arrived soaked through. Never anything but the officer's barracks and the clay heaps of the 'Town.' He grew impatient at this lack of occupation.

One morning he heard steps on deck. As he had awakened early, but given orders not to be disturbed before ten o'clock, he sent up to know who was there. He was told that it was a Methodist preacher named Kennedy. As Gamba had sailed to Malta to get money changed, Geordie, from sheer boredom, invited Kennedy to lunch.

To his astonishment there entered a robust Scotsman with a white moustache, who would have made a marvelous golfer. With his long nose and red face, he diffused an atmosphere of security and homeliness such as only Scotsmen can, regardless of where they are. He spoke firmly and loudly, through his nose, had self-righteous views and treated Geordie like someone he was preparing for confirmation.

Added to that, he was totally uneducated, but knew the Bible almost by heart. Geordie soon observed that he meant to convert him.

"Very amusing," he said, when the preacher had gone. "I can invite him more often.

The following week he asked this man why the walls of Jericho had fallen; why Christ's birthplace was a stable, according to tradition, though in reality

it was a rocky cave; and why, for the sake of a skirmish between the outposts of two Bedouin tribes, God had caused the sun to stand still in the heavens.

And the preacher, who always wanted everything interpreted and understood literally, went for him like a goal-keeper.

One day, when the sky was clear, Geordie saw a small gunboat enter the fiord, which shone a dazzling blue in the sunlight. It cast anchor and dropped a boat, and even before they had landed, he recognized Captains Trelawney and Brown, returned from the Peloponnesus. At the same time, Geordie realized that the decisive moment had come. Of course they had both sent him a mass of reports on the way, but the time had arrived when important things must be discussed.

They greeted one another on the beach. Both implored at once and urgently to be allowed to go to Sir Charles Napier's bungalow and have a bath. They looked horribly ragged.

Napier would allow them to enter his bungalow only after they had removed their clothes in the garden. "I have a damned healthy aversion to lice since I saw five hundred people die of the pest those dear little creatures brought with them."

With that he left the two officers alone at their tea with Geordie, for it was not precisely a neutral conversation they were holding. In the eyes of both captains, all the leaders with whom they had spoken were swine.

"Oh, well, at least we know their military strength and their debts to a tee," said Trelawney in conclusion. "The latter is the more important, because it determines the dependability of the various bands."

"The difficulty was," said Brown, "to discover the feeling in the country at large, for the warring bands are not the country. The people on the Islands are really nice. And the peasants are charming. One might think one was in Scotland."

"Listen," said Geordie, "have you any definite opinion about Maurokordato?"

"At least," replied Brown, laughing, "you can note to his credit that he's the one the others abuse most."

Geordie looked at Trelawney.

"I haven't seen him, and so I can't have any opinion," said the Captain, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Is your instinct against him in any way? You understand what I mean."

"Since I was eight years old, it has been against everybody."

"Did you begin to reflect so early, Trelawney?"

"I was whipped at that age, for the first time, for something I hadn't done."

Geordie had received a letter from Maurokordato, saying that he had left Hydra, and was throwing himself into Missolonghi. That was definite, at all events. For there the war would reach its climax, and Maurokordato had much more to lose than to gain there. It was clear that if Missolonghi fell, Athens must be surrendered. In event of an insurrection, that was not a pleasant prospect. Maurokordato had mentioned that also. He pointed out in his letter that Geordie should not allow himself to be irritated if the disputes among the leaders seemed painful to him at first, but should look into the affair and decide according to circumstances. Geordie felt scarcely any further doubt that he would himself go to Missolonghi.

"If I am not mistaken, I advised that three months ago," said Brown.

"But you couldn't convince me of it then."

Geordie spent the evening at the bungalow. Sir Charles spread his elbows and slapped his thighs when he heard Geordie's decision.

"That is quite sound and good, since you haven't learned anything new from your sun-baked Captains. But consider once more, that the moment you go to Missolonghi you give up your freedom of action."

"I have felt all along that Maurokordato is a gentleman," said Geordie. "But even if he is not, sir, I have never been of the opinion that one must love anyone because he happens to be pulling on the same rope. I know that most of the people to whom I'm going have the morals of jail-birds. God knows, I don't expect any noble souls in the sense one meant at Harrow. Ah, no, I have very few illusions. I am here because I see no better place and no decenter affair in the world. Will you have another whisky?"

"You're a comical hero of Liberty," said Napier, and opened the door on the balcony. "But at any rate, I imagine that in your place I'd say the same thing."

They went out on to the balcony. It was a milk-white night, the stars glittering everywhere so low, they seemed to be at the mastheads of the ships.

"I once traveled by here, sixteen years ago," said Geordie. "At that time I thought every better class Turk a gentleman, but hardly knew a single Greek for whom I could say the same. I don't know that I've very much changed my opinion in the meantime. Nevertheless, I'm here now on the side of the Greeks, pledging my bones, my money and the

Committee's money for these people. There are ideas," he added after a pause, "that are more decisive than our preferences or our experience, Sir Charles."

Sir Charles nodded. He wondered how the young man had arrived at so keen a knowledge of life. "If I hadn't learned that distinction, I should not have become Admiral of the Fleet. The Devil, for years I carried out the orders of superiors who were idiots and gave incorrect commands, but all the time I kept saying to myself: 'They represent the country, and you must honor the flag in them': and I did it. That's probably devilishly hard to make clear to anybody who hasn't served on a warship."

Geordie was silent a while. "I will tell you something, sir," he replied after a pause, "there are other ways than advancement in the navy, for arriving at a certain amount of human understanding." It sounded a little bitter.

"True."

"Good night."

Sir Charles accompanied him to the front door. As they shook hands, Geordie looked into the face of a man whose flesh was taut across his chin. The corners of his mouth ran firmly on into his leathery cheeks. His eyes were blue, his glance candid.

It required a whole array of questions and counter-questions in London and in Missolonghi, to set Geordie's decision in motion. First of all he had to put capital into Maurokordato's fleet, so that he might pay his men. Gamba, who was perpetually traveling to Malta and back as courier, had to go off to Malta again with a check which he stuck to his skin with court-plaster.

"If you will make out your checks in future in

American dollars, you will be able to cash them in Zante," said Brown. "And while I think of it, Colonel Stanhope wants to speak with you this afternoon."

Stanhope was the Committee's resident agent in Missolonghi, and Geordie had received and carefully preserved a number of letters from him. "Invite him to lunch, please. I shall eat alone in my cabin."

When the Colonel climbed the ship's ladder onto the deck, Geordie heard his bones creaking. He was so shrivelled that his face, with its eagle's beak, suited a starved bird better than an officer. He was in civilian dress. The funniest thing about him was his voice. If he had not put some note of adjuration in it, it might very well have been the voice of a singing girl. Geordie took him down to his cabin immediately, and did not appear on deck with him again until Stanhope took his leave.

"Tell Major Parry to mount as much artillery as possible. I will send you a letter ashore this afternoon for Maurokordato, which you might give him if he arrives."

Stanhope gave him a dog-like look. "May I remind you again of the press?"

"I shan't forget it, Colonel."

Geordie met the two Captains on the after-deck. "You met this Colonel Stanhope on your tour, didn't you?"

They both laughed so much that their moustaches quivered.

That night Geordie dined with the Governor.

"Do you know anything of a printing press that is said to be stored in a shed?" he asked.

"I don't like to poke fun at your Committee,"

said Sir Charles, "but it really is there. In the fourth shed, I think. Probably you'll find some other nice things there, too."

"You may amuse yourself as much as you like," said Geordie coolly. "Do you know this Stanhope fellow?"

Sir Charles brushed the notion aside. To think that the young man was always having business with people like that!

"You have an odd sense of humor. What on earth do you talk to Kennedy about?"

Geordie laughed, amused. "When I heard him talking at my table the first time, I immediately decided to make my Don Juan a Methodist preacher. Just that kind of a golfer, who wants to convert the whole world. Kennedy is a very good model. Don't you think it a good idea?"

"Oh, are you still writing?" asked the Admiral, surprised.

"Of course," replied Geordie quietly, and rose.

"Well, well," said Sir Charles, embarrassed, as he accompanied his guest to the door. He should have expected the young man to have quite different plans. Of course it was really quite fine to do a thing for its own sake; to be sure. But why should it not also bring some reward? A real man always seeks to rise. But of course the young man had not served in the navy.

After a time, Gamba returned from Malta with the check cashed. Geordie was very glad to have the always tireless and merry Silvio with him for a while.

Maurokordato had been in Missolonghi for the last three weeks, so that all was in readiness for them to move over.

The morning before they sailed, Geordie rode once more through the scrap of cultivated plain, where he could risk a short gallop. Yali had to go by water again, and he wanted to give him some exercise beforehand. He rode first through vineyards and olive groves. After a quarter of an hour he came to the little channel, which the sea had driven into the Island, and which, at the end of a few hundred yards, disappeared suddenly into the earth. Just before that point, there was a pyramid about the height of a man, a windmill with a number of small vans on it. Yali always started at it and shied a little.

The sea stretched away ethereally from there. It shone so soft, so delicate, so fresh, that it seemed rather like a breath of air than water. The olive trees were silhouetted in silver against it.

Now that things were so far advanced, the ship ready to sail, the sheds emptied, Geordie felt a sensation of quiet happiness. The month of negotiation and preparation had exhausted him somewhat. As he saw the peninsula of Paliki, and the mainland behind it, growing dimmer through the fine, metallic haze, he felt almost painfully drawn toward it.

In the afternoon he wrote a circular letter to the various generals and leaders, about the loan. He told them that the English banks would not so much as consider extending further credit unless they had the absolute assurance that the Greek leaders would hold together. Then he went down to the seashore, to read over a few letters in quietude.

Silvio brought a bundle of letters from Malta, for he had sailed before the mail boat. Among them was a letter from Therese. She had expected him

back by then. But she came of a race which had had experience with like affairs too long for her not to be composed and brave in face of this situation. Among the letters from England was one from Augusta.

Later Geordie rode down to Napier's bungalow, and had his Arab put on board. He went down to the shore himself, and watched it being hoisted on the ship. Then he returned to the bungalow. Sir Charles got back just before dinner and had barely time to change.

"Hello, Sir Charles." He came down the stairs.

"I need to speak to you a moment before everybody gets here."

"Certainly." Napier ushered his guest into his study.

"I should like to know your opinion on this composition." He took the circular letter from his pocket and handed it across the table to the Admiral. Sir Charles read it through, standing, and laughed.

"I should have been rather more courteous. But you are the loan in person, and without the loan everything would go to the dogs."

"Thanks very much. I only wanted to know if it were energetic enough."

Next morning the Mistico weighed anchor, with Geordie and Trelawney on board. Gamba and Hamilton Brown were on the transport, which carried the medical supplies, munitions, guns and horses. The Mistico was a slow sailer, so that they were able to keep side by side until they cast anchor off Zante in the evening. Gamba went ashore in one of the ship's boats to cash a check, and returned in less than an hour.

Shortly after midnight the signal rang out from the bridge. Anchor was weighed, and the ships sailed out to sea once more, making for the mainland. It was the thirtieth of December. In the course of the night the Mistico lost sight of the transport, and returned to Zante in search, remaining that day in the harbor, and not setting sail again until night. As they entered the harbor at Missolonghi they saw the transport already at anchor there.

The harbor was circular, and high boats were drawn up on the beach everywhere. Round the harbor were houses painted mauve and pink. The sun made them an unreal hodge-podge of colors. At the landing place stood soldiers and a crowd of curious folk, and at first Geordie was too dazzled to recognize any one.

The first thing Geordie really made out on the quay was Silvio, standing before him. "But it's impossible."

"I'll tell you everything presently," said Gamba hastily. "This is Major Parry."

"Heavens, how do you come by such a likeness?" said Geordie. If the Major had not taken off his cap and disclosed a shock of red hair, he might have been Charles Napier in person.

"Napier and I sat next one another at the military academy," said Parry. "But it's he who made the career," he added gloomily.

While he was speaking, Geordie noticed that a number of slaughtered sheep were hung up outside a house, behind the string of soldiers. They had been hung with their heads jerked back and their tails between their teeth. Hardly had he observed them, when he saw two youths avail themselves of

the opportunity to cut down a sheep and make off with it.

At that moment he felt that he had reached his goal. A powerful sense of satisfaction spread over his whole body. For a second he almost lost consciousness. Then his mind rose to a clear understanding of the whole situation.

Slowly and calmly, he took in the picture that lay spread out before him, with soldiers, peasants, and houses. Then he followed Parry through an alley. Gamba stopped in a narrow street, grasped a knocker and thumped. Geordie entered a vast, wretchedly furnished hall. The next moment Gamba and Parry pushed past him.

Another man came toward them, and they stepped aside again.

Geordie immediately thought of Marc Bragadin at whose tomb, in S. Giovanni e Paolo, he used to spend a part of each day. The Turks had flayed him alive after the capture of Cyprus. This man had the same remarkable little beard, the same arrogant nose, the same melancholy expression.

"Sir, this is Prince Maurokordato," said Parry, presenting him.

"Go change your clothes quickly," said the Greek in English. "A cold from his damned malarial climate is the last thing I could wish you on your arrival. It's splendid that you're here. And you'll spare me the 'Prince,' won't you?"

6.

HUMAN

In the next few weeks, Geordie had to muster understanding for some very remarkable things. He had got together a small brigade. They were picked youths, but they were of the opinion that they could shoot holes through anybody who happened to offend them, including their officers.

These officers were partly foreigners, who found it difficult to understand such delicate nuances, and threatened to hand their resignations to Geordie at once unless the youths were punished. At first whole mornings had to be spent in negotiating every step.

Geordie was still more amused by the cargoes which the Committee in London collected and sent him weekly. All their old clothes, everything they discarded from their hoards, whatever they possessed in the way of spoiled foodstuffs, the people in London passed over to the nice young ladies who sat in the collection depots. There were men who sent the toys they had had when they were children, and women who handed over their umbrellas and hymn-books. An official of the Colonial Office sent him a box of glass balls such as were exported to the Zulus in Africa. They all agreed that they were helping the cause. And the Committee forwarded these things with cordial letters. They reached Colonel Stanhope, were registered, and sent on further, God only knows where.

When Geordie had all the accounts and corre-

spondence before him, he saw that a number of even stranger things had been sent direct at Stanhope's request. This man had only a private mission, and he was disliked by all the officers.

One day Major Parry came to Geordie and refused to take orders from Stanhope.

"Wait here a moment," said Geordie, and had Stanhope fetched from his office.

Stanhope came in civilian dress, and bowed. Geordie rose. "Colonel, as far as I am concerned, you may ask for as many bugles without buglers as you like. Neither have I anything against school teachers who do not understand Greek. And again, as far as I am concerned, you may tie an adding-machine round the neck of every one of those poor devils who really doesn't even know his own name. Maybe they'll think they're guitars. I've noticed that the Suliots are a very musical people. But Major Parry takes his instructions only from me."

Stanhope with his hawk's nose and doggish eyes stood half turned to the door and stared straight ahead.

"May I ask you to give me that in writing?"

"Here. Good-day."

"If I had had any idea," said Parry, when Stanhope had gone, "that you would put that man in his place like that, I should have complained long ago, sir." And he told him a number of things.

"I know all that."

"The Hell you say. But, pardon me, why don't you throw him out?"

"But, my dear Major, we have him safely here, and he can't take a step without Maurokordato's knowing it. You have no idea what nice things he writes to London about us all. I do not like that

very much. But Mauro appears to have established a really good censor."

Major Parry stared at Geordie with wide open eyes.

At that moment, the door opened, and Geordie was handed a document which he laid angrily to one side.

"Tell those people that I wouldn't think of such a thing," he said to the secretary. "When you have something practical in mind, Major Parry, don't let anything hinder you from coming directly to me with it. Do you need any money? Say so, if you do."

He rose, went up close to Parry and looked him in the face, so that the Major immediately longed for an opportunity to show this man that he knew how to value such a conversation. He bowed and went out.

"Damn it," he muttered on the stairs, "that's a man."

When Gamba entered the room an hour later, Geordie angrily pushed aside a tray of visiting cards.

"Have you been riding?" asked Geordie. "I couldn't manage it today. Won't you do me a favor, Silvio? Please see that people don't continually get up here at me."

"Of course. Have you any mail from Therese?"

"Yes, a frightfully nice letter."

The longer Geordie was in the country, and the nearer grew the conclusion of the loan, the more singular did his position become. He corresponded with the other generals, and none of them were in any way opposed to him, rather they took the greatest pains to show him attentions. In a very short time he had become for them all a guarantee of the

financial interest of Europe. But other things also occurred to strengthen his prestige. The evidence of it came directly from the ranks of the soldiers.

"Now you have a cohort of Janissaries, like the Turkish generals," said Maurokordato, laughing, the first time he entered Geordie's hall and saw twenty soldiers on guard there. "But you are right. Even if it is Turkish, it impresses the people."

The question which constantly worried Geordie was whether Maurokordato was loyal. Frankly speaking, neither he, Trelawney, Silvy nor Brown knew that positively, since this quality cannot be perceived, but must be proved.

On the other hand, Geordie told himself, he must not, though misled by unpleasant experiences, drive his cynicism too far, or distrust everything. Lastly, the very way Mauro stood there talking, really spoke in his favor. Only, it was so difficult for an Englishman, even one who had lived in Italy, to trust a Levantine before he was dead.

"What beautiful pistols you have," he said, with a glance at Maurokordato's sash.

"You must not say that to a Greek," smiled the other, "or he will immediately give them to you."

There was a knock, and Parry entered, holding a brush-proof, which in some way he had managed to get from Stanhope's press, before it was published.

"I am in rather a hurry," he said, entering informally on the heels of the servant, "but Ham Brown, who can't get away, thinks it's rather important."

"Brown is afraid that Stanhope is going to endanger the loan with this stuff," said Geordie, when he had read it. He handed the proof to Maurokordato.

"A comical idea, that—to call the Hungarians to revolt from Vienna, at the same time one hopes to get part of the two million pounds from the Austrians. God knows, I'm no friend of the Austrians, but this is too stupid. Don't raise any objections. This thing will break Stanhope. It gives me great pleasure," said Geordie grimly, after a pause, "to imagine the faces of the Committee at the moment when the Foreign Office sends them a brief inquiry as to the hatching of a little war in Central Europe. But we must see to putting in our own protest before that. Make out a rough draft at once for tonight's mailboat, Parry."

"Have you had any trouble with Stanhope recently?" asked Maurokordato. "He has lately been sending very excited reports to London. Not only about my rascally monarchical plans, but also—about yours."

Geordie laughed.

When Maurokordato had gone, Geordie ordered tea for himself and Parry. The tea had certainly been shipped by sea, but was, in its way, quite good.

"Do you take butter, Major? I've just received some from Holland."

"No, thank you."

"As you like, Parry." Geordie slowly squeezed a lemon into his tea. A small fire was crackling on the hearth. As the aroma of the tea spread, it began to be quite cosy in the room.

"Did it strike you, sir, that when Mauro spoke of Stanhope's darling letters, it sounded damnably as if he were offering you a little crown under the table?"

Geordie glanced up, non-plussed. Then his whole face creased with laughter. "That's a charming

idea, Major. A Greek, thinking of something besides himself! Eh, what?"

"Go on laughing," said Parry dryly. "I know for certain that Mauro will never in this life get the other notables to recognize him. They all hate one another like dogs. Whoever wants to make a career, will make it through a foreigner, mark my words."

"Yes, but why through me?" said Geordie, who found the idea absurd. "It's never even occurred to me."

"Good God," said Parry, "I don't know anyone who, if he could get power so cheaply, would keep his fingers off it."

"Then you shall get to know him. Will you take rum?"

"Yes, please, but not in the tea."

Half an hour later Mauro sent his pistols as a present to Geordie.

"Don't be foolish, Mauro," said Geordie next morning. "You know quite well that you don't have to trot out your real Greek customs for me. So take back your pistols again."

"Please keep them, in the English way," said the Greek coldly. "One gives presents even in London. Do you really always eat soldier's fare?"

"I used to live for months at a time on vegetables. Is there any news?"

"I was wondering a good deal yesterday if a successful action, which could be made in spite of the bad weather, might not help the loan."

"That action would have to be damned certain."

"Of course. Your brigade is as good as ready, isn't it? And you're satisfied with Parry's artillery corps? We could take Lepanto."

"That's a strong fort. And in this weather. Why didn't you take it long ago?"

"You know very well that you can get two regiments from Odysseus which I could never get."

"I only ask what it will cost."

Maurokordato half closed his eyes. Again he resembled the flayed Venetian. The question pained him.

"There is still another possibility. I hear that the two Turkish companies up there haven't been paid for the last six months."

"And what would that cost?"

"Something like twenty-three thousand dollars."

Geordie met the searching glance of the Greek. A sharp suspicion flashed through his mind. Was the Levantine trying to take him in a trap? He was selling him military laurels for which he needed only to pay—and then would be forever indebted to Maurokordato for this ridiculous success. For an instant he was nearly sick with vexation. Must everything be done only with money? But in a moment his face grew calm again. His spirit rose above such personal things. "We may save a few hundred of our people in that way," he said. "I'll see about getting the money."

When the Greek had gone, Geordie opened the window and drew the air deep into his lungs.

"Ah," he thought, "how good. If only it would not keep on raining so everlastingly."

It rained in torrents. For weeks. In Italy, too, there had been rainy seasons, but not these never-ending floods. There was never even a real London fog, or that Scotch mist that spun so dreamy a web over the Cambridge landscape. The rain poured

down with an amazing fury, an unrelenting cheerlessness.

Perhaps Geordie would have thought with more longing of Lanfranchi and Mocenigo, if the expedition had not been so close at hand. Strategically it was not at all a bad idea to take the fort. It was almost mathematically certain that Patras and Corinth must fall also, and then they could concentrate on a final blow.

And as far as the loan was concerned, even if it were not necessary, it was a good idea to get people into the right mood. The coup de main no longer depended on the army, that was finished. The brigade was in such good form that they would have been applauded in Edinburgh. The men were very picturesque, with their tall figures, in their tight-fitting white woolen stockings, their pleated white ballet skirts, reaching to the knee; on their brown heads, the berets, with the tassels that fell coquettishly over their chests from behind—and the big pompons on the front of their shoes.

One morning, Maurokordato came up to Geordie, in uniform, carrying a thin Greek cane. He was very delighted at the way the watch had snapped to attention. "I shouldn't have dreamed you could get those fellows so far. They wouldn't stand either for me or for Odysseus when we crossed the courtyard. Is it true that Odysseus dedicated a sackful of heads to you yesterday? Well, that is a great mark of esteem. But how will you rule such a people? One must take hold firmly once things have gone so far."

For a week now Maurokordato had come back again and again to this point.

"I was not opposed to Napoleon as a dictator,"

said Geordie, "but I certainly am to you. According to your theories, all the leaders and generals ought to be shot at once, though, afterwards, the sun itself will be darkened by the smoke of your civil wars. I think that something like the Americans have set up, a federation of the eighty Islands and clans would be best. You once had something like it."

"Certainly," said Mauro. "And at the end of a fortnight I should have to withdraw hastily to one of the Islands without even my toothbrush."

"That is no real objection. One can always prevent that with a company of soldiers."

"No. Though perhaps with three army corps."

"A dictator, too, would be poisoned within three months."

"Not if a monarchy were established."

Geordie shrugged his shoulders. "It's a little foolish to spend so much time discussing a project that is always being rendered questionable by three Turkish army corps."

Maurokordato rose and walked up and down on tiptoe.

"Do you know why we don't understand one another? You look at the whole question from the point of view of a Greek. Though you are not one. I look at it from the standpoint of European politics. Yet I am a Greek."

"Well?"

"I can tell you the same thing in an even more practical way," remarked Maurokordato calmly. "You have the courage to help found a state here. And then you leave it in the lurch."

Geordie looked Maurokordato straight in the eyes. The Greek had never been so explicit before.

"I have not accepted any mandate to burden myself, later on, with your politics," he said dryly. "Personally, I have four years work before me on my Don Juan."

"Oh, very well," said Maurokordato. "I came about something else." He swung his thin, little cane, and then set the point to the floor, pressing it until it curved. "I heard this morning that the garrison at Lepanto has been changed."

"The Turks are always very well informed," remarked Geordie equivocally.

"Of course the plan has been betrayed."

"For all I care. I shall save a lot of money," said Geordie cynically.

"Yes. Now we shall have to wait until the rain ceases, for the sappers to work. Then you can go through with it with Odysseus," he added imperturbably.

This remark caused Geordie to revise a good deal of that with which he had in his heart accused Maurokordato. So it was a matter of indifference to the Greek if Lepanto were taken with the help of Odysseus! Perhaps it was also a matter of indifference to him whether or not he himself would play an important role later on. Perhaps his continual fretting to have Geordie some day give the whole problem of freedom a definite form at one stroke, was pure idealism after all.

"But what concern is it of mine?" Geordie asked himself. "Even if the people are too primitive to rule themselves in a decent way, they can at least try. And if they are too young for it, then for all I care, they can be educated to it by 'three army corps.' But without me. That is the fate of nations. For some it is easy, for others difficult. We had no cause

for laughter on our own Island until Cromwell, the French on the Continent, not until Marat."

He thought again of Maurokordato. Probably in his own way he was a gentleman. In the evening he sent him a small, beautifully inlaid and solidly constructed pistol, and Maurokordato accepted it quietly, without protest.

Unfortunately the rain kept on pouring that week. And since the expedition had fallen through, the weather was three times as hard to put up with.

Rain beat against the windows. Rain extended far out to sea. And it rained while one rode! It was too much!

And for entertainment no one but Silvio, the Captains and Parry. They were delightful persons, to be sure. But often Geordie would have preferred to be quite alone.

7.

THE HEART

JUST at that time when it would really have been more to the point to be a fish, Geordie felt an insatiable desire to ride.

The paths were certainly boggy, and the air full of putrid gas which rose from the morasses. But what was he to do? Better to ride out in the rain than watch it through the window. And it was pleasant to dry one's self afterwards by the hearth.

The horses were stabled in an old barracks outside the town. It was quite impossible to ride in the narrow alleys. After riding, one had to be ferried across the channel which flowed under the old Turkish walls, and, in the present weather conditions, looked like a lagoon. Wild ducks and pelicans! He rode off hell bent.

One day Geordie rose from table; his face was blazing up and so distorted that Brown and Trelawney, who were lunching with him, thought he would simply collapse. In a few seconds, however, he had himself in hand, sat down again and went on eating.

Next morning it struck Parry that Geordie had big circles under his eyes, but he rode quite briskly, and again the next morning.

That day the sun shone again, and it was suddenly sweltering. Riding homewards, they had a long gallop. He must feel once more that sensation of being connected, through his thighs, with his horse's heart. "It's a shame that one can't jump," thought

Geordie. But the ground was so boggy, one could not wantonly risk breaking the horse's legs.

They had been riding for two hours when a cold breeze began to blow over the walls of the town. Almost at the same moment a bank of bluish cloud rolled in, so close to the ground that the riders were wet through to their skins in five minutes. There wasn't even a tree, high or low. So they got soaked through, and as they were ferried back across the lagoon, the sun appeared again. But the wind, which had veered, was icy.

After lunch it grew icier and icier in Geordie's brain. At last it seemed to him as if he had one of those green Swiss glaciers in his head. He went to bed and immediately had a bad attack. He kept sinking into some hole, shivering in the damned cold. Finally he lost consciousness.

When he came to again, he learned from Fletcher that he had been ill four days. But he was feeling much better and ate with appetite. Towards evening, the fever began again. It mounted, as fever always mounts, but the cold was indescribable. Even the most terrible bodily heat was bearable, but this cold was vile. Yet he must be calm! It would pass. He sank into an icy depth of cold.

Fletcher entered, glanced cautiously at the bed, went out, and came back again.

"Will you receive Mr. Maurokordato?"

"Show him in."

"Thank God, you are able to take notice of things again," said the Greek, going quickly over to the bed. "I thought you had lost all desire to."

"What is really the matter with me?" Two men were standing behind Maurokordato. Greek doctors? He tried to make a wry face, but it did not

come off. Lovely diagnoses these fellows would make. Perfectly obviously it was malaria. The cold and so forth.

"Why, of course you have an attack of malaria," said Maurokordato, who was making a ridiculous effort to talk like a cheeky boy. "It will soon be over."

"Don't put on so worried a face then," said Geordie. "What are your people unpacking there?"

Of course they had lancets. Well, just let them try to come near him with that nonsense. He needed his blood in his own body too much to let them spurt it into their basins.

"Fletcher," he said, but he could not move his head right, and that upset him a great deal. He beckoned Fletcher to bend his head down. "Take these people away. If they come again, you're at liberty to shoot them. I'll ask Parry to give you full authority to do so. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

Fletcher compressed his lips, and his head shook. Even his knees trembled under him as he shut the door on the Greeks. He was damned old already.

"Forgive me," said Geordie to Maurokordato. "But I can always smell when people are incompetent."

At that instant another attack tossed him over on his face, stretched the skin tight over his whole body, and then gathered all its force into a terrible coldness. Damn it, how sickening it was! The attack thrust him down and down, and he closed his eyes instinctively. Would it bear him up again? Back into the sunlight? No flesh in the world could stand that icy drumming much longer. It grew colder

and colder, and he drew himself together, like a hedge-hog.

Presently he felt better and came up again. There was no hint of warmth, but the cold let up a little. He could not open his eyes. Every nerve in them ached, his whole head was one piercing pain. Good God, how such an attack took it out of one. Was there any sense in wiggling his thumbs, to get some feeling in his muscles again? He tried but could not manage it. One was a damned poor thing when one was in pain.

He lay quite still and listened.

"Major," said Maurokordato softly, "this is a devilish bad crisis. Please call the doctors in again."

"Your Excellency, we have both heard him say that he does not want them."

"I am responsible, and I don't care a damn whether he wants them or not."

"Yes, but I have orders to take care that no lancet goes into his arteries."

Maurokordato's voice was suddenly hoarse. "If you get in the way here, I will have you taken out. I will not let this man die. This is not malaria that he has," he added softly.

Parry stared at him. He was silent for a while.

"Very well, your Excellency. I am going now to the harbor to bring the doctor over from Zante."

Parry snatched up his cap and really started off toward the harbor. He could hardly walk against the wind. On account of the blockade, there was no regular boat service, but he thought he might get a yawl. When he finally reached the quay he saw waves as high as houses along the mole. He bowed his head on his breast and worked his way back up the alley.

When he entered the room again, he saw Fletcher's questioning glance fixed on him. "There's no sense in drowning myself," he said furiously. "I'd turn turtle even inside the harbor today, and couldn't get beyond the mole. Here, at least, I can prevent a few things. Spread me a bed in front of the door." He looked round the room again and went grimly out.

"Do you think it's serious?" asked Fletcher outside.

"The idiots," rejoined Parry, with a look of contempt in the direction of the ground floor, where he supposed the doctors to be. "Of course it's malaria."

Fletcher looked at him an instant with desperate doggish eyes. "Perhaps bleeding would help!" Fletcher was not as sure as Parry that his master was always right.

"Can't you see that he's freezing?" said Parry and clasped his forehead in his hand.

When they entered, Geordie's eyes were wide open again. Maurokordato had taken his hand and was chafing it between his fingers. "That's right," he said. "Keep your pupils fixed on the ceiling all the time. Now you must let them take a little blood."

"It is certainly malaria, Mauro," said Geordie. "You've been in London, damn it, and must know that's not necessary."

He grew exhausted and made a movement as if he were looking for something. Parry went quickly to the bed. "Do you want something, sir?"

Geordie twisted his nose round and tried to reach him with his glance, but could not move his eyes far enough to see more than the blanket. How comically furnished the room was! The lower walls were hung with weapons, while above he had sus-

pended his bookshelves. It was only provisional, on account of the attack on Lepanto. If one wanted a book, one had to climb a ladder. Even in Harrow it had not been so clumsy, but when all was said and done, it was in order. Everything in its own good time.

In the meanwhile Parry observed where Geordie's eyes had rested. He rose on tiptoe and took down a small silver pistol. Deliberately he made sure that it was not loaded, and then laid it on the blanket by Geordie's hand.

Geordie was startled for a moment until he understood. What was he supposed to do with a pistol? What did Parry really mean? To do him a favor, no matter what? A nice fellow.

"Parry's really an ox, though," he thought. "No, my dear fellow, I wanted a whisky."

"What does he want?" asked Maurokordato at the other end of the room. "Whisky? With fever? Do you want to kill the man?"

"Don't be stupid, Mauro," said Geordie. "I know best what's good for me."

Maurokordato shrugged his shoulders, and Parry poured out a glass. Geordie was so exhausted from talking that the drink suddenly made him lively. He took very slow swallows, often setting down his glass. As long as he was drinking, Parry stood by the bedside. He pondered intently as to how he might do the sick man a real favor. On account of Stanhope—and all that. It was terrible to watch the man, though he used all his strength he could barely hold the glass.

Yet the Major could not think of just the thing to do. For if he wanted to requite the confidence that this man placed in him, damn it, it must be with

something far more solid than one would do out of mere friendship. But what?

Still pondering, he carried the empty glass over to the table, and, when he turned round, Geordie was asleep. Maurokordato was drumming on the window with his fingers. Parry turned and went, with a disapproving face, to the other corner. He did not at all like this Greek, who now turned his back on him, and liked his drumming still less. What was it if it was not malaria? By his sojourn in western Europe, Maurokordato had lost his feeling for his pleasant native ailments. And these doctors! One and all, they were simply afraid that their great affair would be spoiled if things went badly with their man.

Suddenly Maurokordato was standing in the middle of the room, turning something over in his mind. He went out, then quickly returned. Geordie felt a pressure on his arm and tried to raise his eyelids. At first he could not, but at last he succeeded.

"Under no conditions must you fall asleep now," said Maurokordato somewhere above him, more emphatically than he had ever heard him speak. "Look me in the eye. Just let your eyes rest quite calmly on mine. But you must not shut them."

"Why?"

It was vaguely apparent to Geordie that the Greek was making some tremendous exertion up there above him, and he gazed up into his face.

"This is probably the first time that I have really seen that face," he thought. It was a face full of concern and sympathy. It was strange that he had never seen this softer side before. Was Maurokordato really a sentimental man? The discovery was so funny that he almost succeeded in smiling. There

was a kind of faint shadow at the corners of his mouth. But Geordie was glad that ever since the abortive Lepanto affair he had shown the Greek that he considered him a gentleman.

"Why must you remain awake?" said the Greek presently. "We need you, my dear fellow! You want to get over this little crisis as quickly as possible?"

Of course he wanted to. He needed a few more years for Don Juan. The rest was nonsense. They did not need him. They needed the loan. Then suddenly he recalled something that excited him.

"Open the drawer in my desk, to the right, above the latch. Be quick." He was suddenly afraid that he would not last through.

"If only you wouldn't talk so much," said Maurokordato, annoyed, from the desk. Of course that was rubbish. As long as he could talk it was all right.

"Have you the paper? It's the first draft for the loan. It came the morning my fever began. Sign it quickly before it's all over with me! Send off the original at once!"

Maurokordato was answering him, but he could no longer understand. But it didn't matter. This time the cold was so terrible that it slid over him like an avalanche, and he could hear nothing because of it. It tossed him over again and again on his stomach, and at the same time he plunged into an icy crevice. His skin was being torn from him like a rabbit's,—one jerk, and then another to get it over his feet. This time it was too much.

It must have been almost morning when he came to again, and lay with his eyes closed.

He knew at once that this time he would not get

over it. He possessed an excessive lucidity: nobody could even imagine how far away that devilish cold seemed to drive one, inwardly.

"It's stupid that Silvio isn't here," he thought, "I should have liked to give him something for Countess Guiccioli. But it was I myself sent him off with Trelawney and Brown to Cephalonia. Old Guiccioli would be pleased to see me so wobbly. Well, Therese is free of him, at least. He was a repulsive creature and as treacherous as a camel. They keep an injury in mind for years, and then suddenly slash at you with their teeth. Well, any slashing would finish the old man's teeth. Isn't Fletcher here? I could order him to give Therese a message."

Then he noticed that he couldn't lift his hand to summon him. He felt that he was holding something. Through his half-closed lids he saw that it was a cross.

Well, he hadn't exactly come to Greece for that. He had come . . . God knows, it was obvious. There was no use wasting words. It was all connected with his past life.

He thought how little care and responsibility had rested on his shoulders when, as a youth, he had first seen Salamis, Marathon and Platea. Once he and Hobby had camped in a peasant's hut at Delphi. In spite of the dreadful fleas, the farewell in the morning had been Homeric; yes, that had made an impression on him. All in all, the peasants and the sailors . . . in spite of the fact that for the last few hundred years they had been kept as stupid as swine, yet they had 'punch'; it was splendid. But at any rate . . . he hadn't come as a missionary.

That had been appropriate for the descendants of Ralph de B. who had come with William the Con-

queror to Hastings. At the time of the Crusades they had gone to Palestine for purgation. They knew well enough why. Human creatures always reacted to the idea of helping to make something free. It was to be hoped that it would help more this time than it had then. For the Crusades had been a terrible smash.

"If only they don't, in God's name, make a ridiculous figure out of me," he thought. "I must commission Parry to be careful that they don't start saying: I came here as Hercules in the interest of Christendom."

This idea troubled him seriously for a while, until he succeeded in opening his eyes. He saw Parry's profile, as he sat at the foot of the bed. There was something reassuring in that firm outline with its epaulettes, and the broad chin.

"Parry."

The moment he uttered the name, the blood rushed for the first time hotly to his head. It was a long while before Parry reached him. Why did the fellow roar so?

"Listen, Parry . . . don't let them . . . bury me in England." The devil, he had really meant to say something quite different.

"Isn't there some better favor I can do you?" asked Parry morosely. In this life he always got there too late—even for promotion. If someone wanted something, or if he wanted to do something for anybody, as for this man, then it had to be something post mortem. Absurd! He stretched himself.

"There's no hurry about dying, sir."

The man on the bed bothered himself damned little about any comforting of his, but he suddenly shouted.

"Lepanto!"

What a pity that he really was not this way!

When Fletcher, hearing the noise, came in, he found that his master could suddenly speak quite well again.

"Dig the trenches more to the left, Parry. You can mount the cannon better."

And Parry answered, "Certainly, sir."

Fletcher stood, leaning with his back against the wall, near the door. His master was delirious the whole morning, and Major Parry stood at the foot of the bed, in order to look into his eyes, bent over, with his chin on his breast, and asked whenever he could not understand, "What, sir?"

Fletcher observed that the red head, above the stooping shoulders, shook from time to time, and that then Parry's skull looked from behind as if it would fall off. Fletcher placed his arms between himself and the wall. His eyes grew filmed as a parrot's do. He thought of his wife and children whom he had not seen for six years.

"God knows," he said to himself, "perhaps I shall get back to England now."

This thought did not leave him again. It would be splendid to see old England once more. The children must be upstanding young fellows by now. He grew quite happy.

And he had missed all that, he thought with a slight resentment, for the sake of the man who had now stretched himself out there to die. And why? His master had always been pig-headed. He had been stubborn even when he was in school, when Fletcher used to lay out his stockings for him in the mornings. "The master ought really to have let them bleed him a bit," thought Fletcher.

At that moment he realized that if Geordie really were to die, he would return quite alone to England. Yes, and what would he, Fletcher, do there alone? Of what use would he be, if the man lying there were to die? Would there be any sense in his going on living at all? "Hardly," thought Fletcher, "hardly."

Without his moving a muscle, the tears rolled down his old cheeks.

When Geordie came to again, he immediately heard the rain splashing against the window. There were several people in the room, too, but he did not trouble himself who they might be. He felt happy, and only pleasant thoughts came to him.

He remembered his whole decent childhood. He thought of many charming and amusing people. How 'fair' it had been of Clare to put down the bath-mat for him that time at Harrow. And that was an amusing business with the key and the flag they hauled down—all on account of Hag.

And then Annesley? Had Dorset really known why he had had to defend him to the Crow that night? What a foolish boy he had been in those days, at the gate with Mary Chaworth.

And then the horses and Cambridge. Bobby! My God, what damned impudence on his part, taking that girl to the fox hunt! That was probably the most amusing dinner he ever attended. Only once again had he ever laughed as much, and that was at Lady Melbourne's, about the secretary to the treasury, who had sat next him at dinner and yet had not asked him anything after all. Human beings were a strange crowd, all said and done—there was a great deal they wanted to know, and a great deal they did not. And sometimes they did not ask after

all when there really was something they wanted to know.

For who really understood anyone else? In the end everyone departed with a well kept secret.

He thought of Lady Oxford, who could not grasp the fact that he rang when she left him, so that the servant should not come. She thought that one rang for servants only if one wanted them—and she could never be brought to think otherwise. Wasn't it true that most people didn't understand one another? And in most cases it was a more serious matter than the ringing of a bell. But let's have done with it! It wasn't important any more.

Did everyone have such thoughts before the final note? It was amusing, when one had at last really freed oneself from all the dubious facts, it was no longer possible to talk of them. The tongue must be paralyzed. Things were certainly not perfect.

And Don Juan would never be finished now. That grieved him deeply, but had he not, perhaps, written enough? If it had really been essential that he finish it, he would probably have been spared a few more years. Fame would probably be his in any case.

And this business of Greece; that would get along by itself. His role had been overrated. His prime work had been done with the loan. Ideas were no better than rotten fish if they broke down at the very point when a man who had served them, had to make off.

Oh, now he could suddenly see clearly. In the room were Parry, Fletcher and Mauro. Then one of them shouted, "Louder." He had nothing to say. He closed his eyes and thought of Augusta.

Now that he knew that this torture of being sick

could not last much longer, the thought of A for the first time brought nothing terrible in its train. No scandal, no laws, no anxiety came with it.

She was sitting in a tree in the Holderness' garden, her long childish legs dangling down overhead. And she said, "If you try to climb up, little boy, you'll get something on your nose you won't like." Suddenly he smelt about him the melancholy scent of fruit trees. It had been a long fragrant summer. And then he saw clearly the acres of corn at Holland House, and the fields, with the silvery carriage ruts, at Six Mile Bottom, while in the background Newstead Abbey appeared. All the trees and the bushes stood in full leaf around it. But he himself was lying in the midst of a malaria swamp, with an Albanian patrol, and was dying. Ah, Augusta had always been his life.

He recalled the day he returned from Holland House to Piccadilly, after he had seen her under the shower bath, and knew that it was a matter of life and death between them. He had suffered terribly because of course he had thought that between them anything and everything was impossible. What was it A said to him when he had had to talk about it, that time before she went to St. James'? "I never even knew my father."

Since that evening he had never been unhappy again. Even, when with all his strength, he had forced himself never to see A again for a single moment. Six years—it was no trifle.

Looking especially now at the manly side of his conduct, had the Crow really been right when she said, in Aberdeen, that he hadn't as much 'punch' as Captain John, his and A's father? 'Punch'? The devil, it would not have prevented his running away

from fate with Augusta. It would have been base cowardice if he had disappeared with her. Really, he had kept drifting deeper and deeper into misfortune at that time, because he kept trying to save A. No, he had not run away. He had done what any decent man would do, taken whatever there was to bear upon himself—and had borne it ever since.

Devil take it, not very much had been spared him. In the end, it had even been more than a man could bear. That marriage with Bel. And the extortionate separation agreement. And the other separation which followed logically from the scandal, and about whose nature and causes he had never spoken a single word with A. In the end, through this separation, he had lost almost all the happiness a man could hope for, who had only once been passionately in love.

'Punch'? Oh, yes—he really might credit himself with that, at least in his sense. At any rate, he had marched straight into misery for it, and was now going to pieces here. "I do not regret it," he thought and smiled feebly. Nobody suspected that he had always, even here, one bond which kept him up damned high.

And now, slowly, he saw Augusta Leigh coming across the meadows at Holland House, with the greyhounds. "Good. One must," he thought after a time, "consider a life like that from the practical side, also." There was a logical consequence in events, which must lead beyond his own wretchedness or happiness. What sense was there really in all his misery?

Well, if he had not gone through all that with A, some important thing or other would not have been

done later. Something or other must have significance, at least the loan. And lastly, he had supplemented what he had written with his life itself,—and again, devil take it, had paid for it! There, that was some kind of a balance which, as a decent man, he could lay on the threshold of death.

And then he felt for the medallion which must be hanging round his neck. Pipin!

He could not reach it. Parry, who had noticed the movement, ran to him, encountered a hard look from under the closing lids, and laid his left arm under Geordie's back, raising him slowly somewhat higher. He understood in a flash that that was what this man wanted.

"I will push a pillow under him presently," thought Parry.

As his head was lifted higher, Geordie gazed straight at Maurokordato. He really did look like Marc Bragadin in San Giovanni è Paolo. Probably he, too, had been flayed, at heart. It was no joke, what this man had to do here, and he himself was taking away many of his chances. But—of course it really was malaria. The diagnosis was quite clear, little as that mattered now. He really had not wanted to dispute what he was dying of.

At the thought of that cold, the fever suddenly swept over his brain again, and his heart-beat stopped in his throat. Supported by the artilleryman's arm, he bent forward slightly, and, at the same time, tilted his head and chin far back. It was somewhat the same movement, with which a young woman, in a riding habit, had once upon a time said 'good-day' to all the things she loved at Newstead Abbey.

But this time the movement was not quite finished, for half way through it Geordie was dead.

"Lay him down gently, Parry," said Maurokordato. "You don't know how afraid I was he would go mad. He had cerebral meningitis."

During the next few days Parry went about his duties rather automatically, impressing those who knew him, as a man who did not have himself entirely in hand. It was the first time such a thing had ever happened to him.

When he was alone he talked to himself. Now and again he found himself down at the harbor, or rowing across the lagoon along the wall, without knowing how he had got there. When he finally went to bed at night he fell asleep at once. But between three and seven he lay awake.

He kept brooding always over the same thing.

In the meantime the weather had improved, and the ship arrived with the doctor from Zante who was to make the post-mortem. Parry met him at the harbor. He felt very warm when the little man with the greenish eyes came ashore with two assistants, accompanying him on the right and left.

"I started to fetch you," said Parry, taking off his cap. "But this weather! Now at least you can determine the cause of death."

He led them up himself, and watched the three men change their clothes, tie on aprons and enter the bright room in the tower.

"Well, what do you think?" he asked grimly as these people who had been so coolly and freely chatting at their work, took off their aprons and began to wash their hands. "The exitus letalis was cerebral meningitis," the surgeon answered, bending low over the basin of water.

"Oh! I thought it was malaria."

The little man turned round, and his eyes were suddenly narrow and flashing. He dried his hands.

"Malaria, did you say? He had that, too, and plenty. But the cause of his death was cerebral meningitis. The malaria was at the other end, for company, and cooled him off while the inflammation warmed him up. Have you another towel, Dr. Lee? And Mr. Parry, it would be as well to order the embalming as soon as possible."

"Thank you," said Parry, with an expression of repugnance.

"Is there anything else to be done, Major?"

Parry accompanied them as far as the door and gave them a soldier for escort. "A shabby crowd," he thought angrily and went back into the house. He had a room prepared for himself, and decided not to leave the house as long as the embalming was going on.

While they were working in the next room, and the smell of chemicals and acids filled the house, Parry continued to brood darkly. He had never before happened into a conflict where he could see no way out, but this time he was firmly caught.

Geordie, dying, had expressed the desire not to be buried in England, but he was not yet twenty-four hours dead, and it had already been decided to ship him back to the Thames on a gunboat.

All Parry's Englishness naturally approved the idea; what had come from England and was so constituted as the man who lay there, ought to return to English earth. But he had promised the contrary. Parry knew that he must kidnap the body that day, if he meant to keep his word—then his mind would be at rest. But, devil take it, what was he going to do with the corpse up in the mountains? For thirty-

seven years he had done everything straight and plain—and in the end things had always been right. But now he had made that mistake about the malaria—and this business had followed. Faithful or sensible, which? Even Fletcher had declared his master was delirious.

Meningitis? Perhaps he had already been mad at the time? And yet—no, one couldn't dispose of the matter like that, when one had promised a dying man to carry out his last wishes. But, damn it all, how was it possible to come to a decision?

There was a knock. A servant entered.

"Major Parry," he said softly, "I am to give you the report on the post-mortem."

"Good."

When the man had gone he tore the paper open. He did not understand much of it. So the head had the cranium of an eighty-year-old man. No suture! The sinus frontalis lacking entirely—what might that be? An extravasation of two grams of bloody serum under the pons varolii, at the base of the hemispheres . . . his distrust of the doctors increased.

It was weird—two dangerous illnesses, but only one of them deadly, and yet that was just the one which he had not suspected. Wasn't it all absurd? He read on.

The lungs deep and sound; anyone could see that —one didn't need those fellows to say so; talking like plumbers while they cut up so fine a man! The kidneys normal. "Good," he thought, "But what use is all that now?"

A voice outside asked to enter. A young man with a curly blond head and white apron.

"Hello, sir."

"Good-day."

"Can you come over for a moment? We are just going to eat a bite."

"Certainly."

Parry followed the young man. Everything seemed to have been finished. They told him that they had already laid the body in the lead coffin, which would only be screwed down since it was to be opened again. On the walls, on the table, and even on the ceiling, a throng of lights were burning.

On the table stood a silver receptacle, and beside it, in the corner, a silver box. It was very clean and bright, and the lights flashed splendidly on the metal.

"Look at this! Astonishing," said the young man while the others were washing. He lifted something out of the silver box.

"In what way?" Parry screwed up his eyes distrustfully.

"It is almost twice the normal size," said the young man, holding something rose-colored on the palm of his hand, under the light. "Don't you think so big a heart remarkable?"

"I should have thought it remarkable if it had been smaller," said Parry curtly. "Have you much more to do here?"

"Nothing, really. But somebody must be here until the man comes to solder the box."

He laid the soft muscle slowly back in its case. All the colors of the rainbow glimmered on its delicate salmon-pink. Parry considered quickly.

"Then send someone at once. In the meanwhile I'll wait outside the door."

When the embalmers had disappeared, Parry went back into the room, remained standing in the middle, with his eyes raised to the ceiling like a har-

rassed dog. Then he rubbed his chin twice, went across to the table, opened the silver box, took out its contents, and carried it on the palm of his hand to his own room. There he stayed for a few moments, then went to the window and called the guard.

"Stand guard in here, my son," he said. "Someone is coming presently to solder a box in here." He opened the door and lifted the silver thing in his hand. It was very heavy. "Nobody must lift the lid. Do you understand? If anything happens, you'll be sorry for it this evening."

Then Parry went to Maurokordato, carrying something under his arm.

"My master will receive you," said the servant, and Parry passed through a narrow corridor into a large hall.

"What is the matter, Parry? Unfortunately, I rarely see you," said Maurokordato, rising.

"And I am bringing you something rare." He laid a box on the table. "That is Lord B's heart, I have had them solder up an empty box."

Maurokordato, who was hardened to many things, lost self-command for a moment. He stared at the artillery man through half-closed eyes. Although he had lived in Europe for a long time, there was something incomprehensible about every European, to his way of feeling. Enemies' heads—that seemed impossible to them! But this business —simply to take a friend's heart out of one's pocket . . . of what Parry was now telling him, he understood neither his action nor even approximately, the substance of his inner conflict. But he listened calmly.

"Yes," he said, "later on we might wall it up in

the Thesaion." While he was speaking, he realized what this piece of muscle was worth to him.

He put the box away carefully, and Parry left, feeling that a load was off his conscience.

But the nearer the day drew on which Geordie was to be taken to Cephalonia, the more troubled Parry's thoughts again became. When, as often happened again, he lay awake between three and seven, doubts came to him whether the ways and means he had taken to get out of his moral dilemma were correct. He could not recall a single instance in which, for any purpose whatsoever, he had, to put it bluntly, practiced deceit. Finally he perceived that there was no other way out than to talk to Sir Charles about it.

He went to Maurokordato to have command of the transport given him. It was really very hard to spare him, for a Turkish division was again south of Missolonghi, but Maurokordato did not want to make any mistake in an affair in which he, too, was involved. One could not tell what this rabid man might not set on foot.

"If you must discuss your private affairs with the Admiral, you can, as far as I am concerned, take command. Have you considered what you will do if he does not approve your conduct?"

Parry shrugged his shoulders. "There is only one possibility," he said. "I should have to take my leave of the English service."

"Well, at any rate, we shall see you again."

"I doubt it," said Parry and saluted.

A few days later the gunboat entered the roadstead at Argostoli. With flag at half mast, it sailed up the fiord in the gray dawn. Hardly had it anchored, when the Governor's boat moved away from the

mole. Five minutes later Sir Charles clambered up the ship's ladder and vaulted over the rail. Parry awaited him, cap in hand, made his report, and then led the way down the companion to the cabin.

"Did you have a good voyage?" asked Napier on the way down.

"Yes. Thank you, sir."

"Tell me, Major Parry, is it possible for the coffin to be opened again?"

Parry turned and pressed down the latch of the cabin door. Napier saw that his question was superfluous.

"I have brought something with me," said Sir Charles, and crossing to the coffin, laid a small flag on it.

Then they went up again to look through the lists.

"Has it struck you that he (Sir Charles motioned downwards) had two quite different sets of features? Is this the list of effects?"

Sir Charles inspected the trunks, which had been piled up on deck, in order to take them over and have them sent ashore.

"All these things will go to London on the next warship," he said musingly. "I suppose they can fasten up down below now, Atkinson. That's how Englishmen are!" He turned to Parry. "I'm sure there was many a time when nobody would have staked two pounds on him. But now they'd go to war over his corpse. Isn't there something missing here?"

"No," answered Parry, "it is here."

"Yes, you are right."

Parry thrust out his chest and grew purple in the face.

"But there is something missing. That box is empty."

Sir Charles peered sharply for an instant into Parry's eyes. "Will you speak with me to one side for a moment," he said.

"Sir Charles," began Parry in a rather hoarse voice, when they had reached the captain's bridge, "not to embroider things at all, I myself took the contents of the box and then had it soldered down. I leave it to your judgment to say if I have done wrong, for the dead man begged me, shortly before he died, to see that he was not buried in England. If you tell me that I have not acted as a decent man, I will take the consequences."

Sir Charles gazed at Parry's hands, and then past him at the beach where the flag was flying.

"Is this a private conversation?" he asked curtly.

"No, sir."

"You did not act correctly, Major Parry."

"Thank you, sir. The circumstances were very difficult for me. I had given my word."

"Parry." Sir Charles studied his finger nails. "You are talking nonsense. When a thing has not been done properly, one doesn't say that the reasons were complicated. Can that change anything? What have you done with the object?"

"Maurokordato has it, sir."

Parry was filled with a terrible anger at meeting so little understanding.

"Sir Charles," he said and took a step forward, white as the sail above him, "you sat beside me at the cadet school. What would you have done in my place?"

"That is not what you asked me," replied the Admiral. His voice was hard, as if to say that so

perplexing a business would never have come into his sphere of action. "You asked, Parry, if you had acted correctly from an official point of view. The answer could only be yes or no. Where the devil would we be, else?"

Sir Charles glanced down at the toes of his boots. Then he looked across at the flag, and all about him. He moved with effort in a world in which one became at best a Major.

"We will now go to your cabin, Major, and write a report. You will declare in plain language, that at Lord B's request you kept back the missing object. No details. I will see that the report is made public on the arrival of the warship in London. No one will be asked his opinion. It will be announced to the world as an accomplished fact. You will see, not another word will be wasted on your story. That, Parry, was a private conversation. Will you have a cigar?"

"Thank you, sir," said Parry, feeling, as he lit it, as if a weight had rolled from him.

Sir Charles blew the smoke of his cigar straight up in the air. Comical, the sort of things that went on in old Parry! A splendid character! There ought to be many such people. But he was not the man to reach the top. Under no conditions.

"Hello, sir."

They stood aside while the stewards carried by the big nickel case, which had been screwed down again, to set it under a sail on the fore-deck.

"When will you fetch him?"

"Early tomorrow morning. About six, I think. Lay a flag over the coffin."

"Poor fellow—to have to go so young."

"Really, we are both still young," said Parry. "I

hope people won't forget that the whole business for which he died out here had absolutely nothing to do with him."

"Hardly. Outside the artillery life is not as decent as you think, Parry."

Parry felt rising in him all the anger of a lifetime at the injustice of his lack of advancement. "Well then, nothing different will happen to him than to all other decent men," he said curtly and turned away.

They gazed in silence across the fiord. A peasant, driving a plough, came slowly almost to the beach, then turned so that the ploughshare flashed. A herd of goats and donkeys were moving about here and there on the shore, and yet seemed to be standing motionless in the rose and mother-of-pearl mist that lay for sixty miles over the sea. Yet, as they looked up, they could see the trees behind the bungalow, stirring, beautiful and restrained, against a brilliantly clear sky.

Sir Charles knocked his cigar against the railing.

"Will you spend the night at the bungalow?"

"Thank you, sir. I should like to. But this man, through my fault, no longer has a heart. I think I had better stay with him."

Sir Charles nodded. "At six."

"At six."

He did not glance up again from the companion ladder.

"Incorrigibly decent idiot," he murmured appreciatively as, followed by the sharp dog-like eyes of the Major, who was so much like him even to certain important details, and with a great silvery triangle of water behind his boat, he was rowed back to land.

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